CENTER FOR SPIRITUAL AWARENESS
STUDIES IN TRUTH LESSON GUIDE
MASTER COURSE NUMBER ONE

91492

The Path of Light

JOURNEY TO DISCOVERY

There is a fundamental law of life. To recognize it we must understand where life comes from, and where it is heading. We must look beyond our immediate goals to what we want to finally accomplish in our lives. We must consider life's ultimate purpose: that is, its highest potential for development.

PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA

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Studies in Truth Lesson Guides are published and distributed by Center for Spiritual Awareness for private use and guided study supervised by acknowledged CSA ministers, teachers and group leaders. Prepared and written by Roy Eugene Davis as an examination of the enlightenment process, with emphasis on the traditions, philosophy and practice of Kriya Yoga. Center for Spiritual Awareness, Post Office Box 7, Lake Rabun Road, Lakemont, Georgia 30552 (U.S.A.). In West Africa: Center for Spiritual Awareness, Post Office Box 507, Accra, Ghana.

Prelude

This series of Lesson Guides makes available an overview of essential facts about the nature of consciousness, along with result-producing procedures which, if applied, can contribute to total wellness and spiritual growth. While assimilation of helpful information is of value, of lasting usefulness is to apply what is learned to facilitate self-learning, personal experimentation and the unfoldment of understanding which can blossom into true knowledge and, further, into wisdom.

In our approach we honor all authentic enlightenment traditions, understanding that one's inner journey to discovery is uniquely individual. Outer modes of worship, cultural attitudes and behaviors, and even personal patterns of growth may differ, but the inner way to the actualization of soul capacities and fulfillment in God is the same for everyone. We awaken from simple states of consciousness to self-consciousness, then to soul awareness, cosmic conscious states, progressive perceptions of God and experiences of transcendence. The more obvious is our conscious understanding and willing cooperation with divine impulses, the more rapid is our progress and the more obviously influential grace becomes.

Valid information, revealed and discovered, along with recommended learning procedures is here provided on a planned schedule to allow for systematic study and assimilation of knowledge acquired through perception and experience. If you are new to this philosophical and lifestyle emphasis, the Lesson Guides will provide you with the essentials to enable you to definitely experience life-changing benefits and satisfactory spiritual growth. If you are already well advanced on the awakening path, this program can help you clarify your direction in life and provide the basic, fundamental principles upon which true soul fulfillment is grounded, as well as sustained encouragement to remain steady in your resolve.

When approached with an optimistic attitude, learning and spiritual growth can be natural and enjoyable. As spiritual beings, reflected lights of Supreme Consciousness, we are innately endowed

with virtually unlimited capacities. These have only to be allowed to unfold and express. We are meant to remove ourselves from all restricting influences, to be restored to knowledge and function and to spontaneously live in harmony with laws natural and supernatural so that God might be glorified through us.

Spiritual growth can be quickened by intelligent endeavor and cooperation with universal forces which, because they are supportive, can be considered as benevolent. While evolutional influences persistently contribute to our spiritual growth whether we are aware of their effects or not, by voluntarily choosing to participate with them our progress becomes increasingly predictable and easy. The determining factor is this: by renouncing ("letting go of") attitudes, opinions, feelings and behaviors which are not helpful in enabling us to fulfill worthy purposes, and by cultivating those which are, we accomplish more in less time and thus speed up our spiritual evolution. Progress is slow, medium, or rapid depending upon our focus and conscious participation.

As we open our minds and hearts to God, as God is real to us, let this be our soul-felt prayer: "Omnipresent, omnipotent God: lead us from spiritual darkness to the light of perfect realization. Lead us from unknowing to full knowledge. Lead us from unconsciousness to forever experience of changeless Reality."

I acknowledge the Light you are,

The decisive question for man is: Is he related to something infinite or not? That is the telling question of his life. Only if we know that the thing which truly matters is the infinite can we avoid fixing our interest upon futilities, and upon all kinds of goals which are not of real importance.

CARL JUNG (1875-1961)
Dreams, Memories, Reflections

The Path of Light

The innate, primary urge of every soul is to have awareness consciously restored to a relationship with the Infinite. This insistent desire of the heart has given rise to religions, philosophical systems and a variety of practices meant to provide a dependable, efficient way for this aspiration to be realized.

According to useful information available to us, our capacity to learn and apply what we learn, and circumstances most favorable to support our endeavors, we experience personal progress. It is also understood that psychological temperaments vary. This contributes to the choices we make as how to best adopt a lifestyle most suitable to our individual needs as well as to our approach to understanding and experiencing a relationship with God. If adequate information is not readily at hand, it can be acquired by diligent research and by learning to be open to the universe and to trust it to meet our needs. Learning capacities can be improved and skills acquired. Circumstances can be adapted to, if they are reasonably suitable for our purposes, or they can be changed by decision, intention and suitable actions. Finally, while acknowledging the validity of lifestyle modes and spiritual practices useful for the purposes of others, we can find that path which is most suited to our own and adhere to it with willing participation.

For some, the way of intellectual inquiry is most satisfying. To others, the way of devotion, the way of service or the way of intensive meditative contemplation may be more useful. I recommend a balanced, integrated approach while being true to one's soul-inclined path of discovery. Most intellectuals could benefit by balancing their efforts to discern with devotion, service and meditation practice. Many devotional persons need the understanding which can result

from intellectual inquiry. Everyone needs to learn to serve the cause of evolution and to participate in social and planetary transformation. And sooner or later, meditation must be practiced, whether as a spontaneous experience or an intentional discipline, to afford one the opportunity to have direct experience of higher states of consciousness, God, and the field of pure consciousness which transcends manifest realms and their forms.

I describe the enlightenment path as one of light because as soul awareness becomes progressively released from restricting influences, the qualities of purity and luminosity become increasingly evident. Unconsciousness, lack of knowledge, is darkness for the soul. Consciousness, unfolded knowledge, is light and freedom. An axiom of enlightenment teachers is: "Knowledge is grounded in consciousness." This is so because consciousness is the only reality. It is the single self-referring, self-expressive essence making possible all phenomena while, at the same time, having the unbounded aspect of itself unmanifested and remaining as being and existence.

As souls, we are reflections of pure consciousness identified with mental processes and the physical body. But as an ocean drop contains the essence of the ocean, so we innately possess the attributes and characteristics of God, including cosmic knowledge. As knowledge unfolds we experience insights, revelations of the truth about ourselves, nature and God. When we are inspired to contemplate the meaning of life, when we are informed from without about the character and workings of the universe, only what we perceive as being true is true to us. Therefore, while acquired information is helpful, knowledge alone is liberating and that knowledge unfolds from within us.

It is useful to learn from others and to take on faith what seems to us to be accurate information, so that we can order our lives and pursue higher understanding for ourselves. But acquired information, even if valid, is second-hand superficial knowledge and we cannot be satisfied with merely believing the report of another. We can only live with authority when knowledge is clearly experienced as our own.

The path of light does not require forever blind faith. Instead, it demands intellectual evaluation and practical experimentation. It is understood, by teachers of all enlightenment traditions, that each person must traverse the path for himself but have help along the

way. We may have a strong physical constitution and good health, a curious interest in life processes, a sound mind and psychological balance and the benefit of a supportive environment. We may have the accumulated knowledge of past experience or a natural aptitude to learn quickly. We may have some, or none of these benefits but they can be acquired. We certainly have the blessings of the saints, the ever-availability of grace and the support of the universe itself which nourishes our bodies and provides an abundance of resources for the satisfaction of our legitimate needs and the fulfillment of our worthy purposes.

We are not alone in the universe. As reflected lights of pure consciousness we are divine to the core. While embodied, we share in our minds and bodies the ingredients of which the universe is comprised. We are an integral part of the cosmic process and have a necessary role to play in its expressions and outcomes. We are only a little while on Planet Earth. Even so, while here we interact with the energies of our galaxy and with the forces circulating throughout the universe. We have come here from inner space and to inner space we shall return. So long as we relate to the material realms we are citizens of eternity, playing our roles in the field of endless-time, but eventually to be removed from spacetime to have awareness restored to the unbounded field of pure consciousness. In our souls we know this to be true, but often the more obvious sense is that we have come to Earth and forgotten heaven; we have gotten involved with superficial matters and lost the memory of how we were before our initial involvement with spacetime and matter.

Spiritual growth is, quite simply, the result of having our awareness removed from conditions and influences which restrict and having it restored to clarity and knowledge. And while outer circumstances are sometimes challenging, the more resistant ones are within our own minds. It is within that the work is done and it is when the subjective side of life is known that the objective side makes sense.

It is useful to learn how to relate to the world and how to get along in it. It is also necessary to acquire a metaphysical understanding of inner causes, because the more we know about the operations of higher laws the easier it is to work with lower ones. And the metaphysical way is not complicated. It is simple when we learn how to cooperate with higher laws, because they are dependable. In the

physical realm things malfunction or wear out. I may drive my car successfully without knowing anything about how the car's motor functions and will be able to do so until it needs to be repaired or replaced. But universal laws never malfunction or wear out, and never have to be replaced because they do not change. We are forever having to adjust to outer changes—environmental, social, cultural, economic—but the only adjustments necessary in relationship to universal laws are those required of us to continue to improve our understanding of them.

The Emergence of Revealed Knowledge in Our Era

Revealed knowledge progressively emerges into social consciousness as conditions are suitable for its expression; then becomes somewhat dormant coincidental with cosmic events and planetary circumstances. When knowledge emerges, civilizations develop. When knowledge gradually diminishes, civilizations decline. We are currently in a rapidly ascending, or awakening, era during which millions of people are sincerely seeking higher understanding and knowledge of God.

The history of man's behavior and culture is only known with relative accuracy from approximately 12,000 B.C. Man has been on the planet for hundreds of thousands of years, but other than remains discovered by researchers, clear evidence is scant. The ending of the last Ice Age marks the beginning of our current history. That intelligence was not entirely obscured even during prehistory epochs is evidenced by the fact that several early known civilizations had advanced knowledge of medicine, mathematics, astronomy and architecture, along with well-developed philosophical systems and regimens of practice known to contribute to spiritual growth and illumination of consciousness. Even during the darkest of Ages the light of knowledge is never totally eclipsed, but remains in the minds and consciousness of a few.

During Dark Age cycles the greater portion of humanity is relatively unconscious, not unlike many in the world today who are reasonably functional but without higher understanding. During the initial ascending cycle, such as the one now occurring, humanity begins to awaken and becomes functional in a partially awakened condition, with subconscious influences and illusions due to misper-

ception being common. During the following ascending cycle the majority of people on the planet will be fully self-conscious, emotionally mature and possessed of highly developed mental capacities. Then will follow a longer cycle during which the greater percentage of the population will be superconsciously aware and highly spiritually evolved. But we do not have to await a future cycle to be spiritually awake. We can learn to live superconsciously regardless of outer prevailing circumstances.

Religious philosophies and practices evolve to meet human needs. During Dark Age cycles, when intelligence is minimal, ignorance and superstition prevail. During the time-phase when human consciousness becomes more capable of apprehending the finer properties of Nature and the inner workings of the mind, such as the one now unfolding, spiritually motivated individuals become more curious and are willing to investigate the facts of life for themselves. Knowledge replaces belief and experiences prove the laws of causation, enabling one to be more self-determined and enter into a cooperative relationship with universal forces. Our current era, then is best suited for the teaching emphasized in these Lesson Guides. For as truth seekers become able to discern the existence of higher laws and fine cosmic forces they are able to comprehend the practical usefulness of Kriya Yoga philosophy and practice. One must be reasonably intelligent and more conscious than normal to even understand this teaching and be inspired to put it into practice.

Kriya Yoga is the way to accelerated spiritual growth and includes everything we intentionally do to contribute to our wellness and enlightenment. *Kriya* is a Sanskrit word for "action," actions we perform for their beneficial results and spontaneous actions which result as we experience inner transformation and outer changes. *Yoga* can mean "to join one's attention with its object," hence the popular definition that it refers to uniting the soul's awareness with God. *Yoga* can also mean "process": that which is done and experienced to accomplish desired ends. Therefore, even if the word *yoga* is not used, there can be no intended accomplishment of purpose without disciplined action, whether it be chosen behavior, an adjustment in mental attitude and states, or a subtle adjustment in states of consciousness.

Kriya Yoga is mentioned in several ancient scriptures. In the *Yoga Sutras* (Part Two, verse 1) we find this explanation: "Self-

discipline for the purpose of regulating sensory impulses, study (of natural laws and metaphysics), and surrender to God is the way to perfect (soul) peace. This is the path of Kriya Yoga." It is then easy to see that this approach is not only compatible with all self-actualization systems, it defines and focuses upon the basic principles which determine life processes as well as procedures helpful to our understanding them. The philosophy supporting the practice of Kriya Yoga, when understood, reveals the inner nature and workings of the universe as well as the reality of God. The practices, when learned and adopted, enable the sincere spiritual aspirant to remove himself from limiting circumstances and be open to the transforming influences of God's grace. Not only can outer circumstances be improved and psychological states become more healthy and stable, the body can also be refined so that it becomes better capable of processing higher states of consciousness—a possibility often neglected by many who are otherwise sincerely on the enlightenment path.

The moral and social behaviors emphasized in the Kriya tradition are common to all religious and cultural guidelines recommended for human good and harmonious relationships. What is unique is the philosophical overview and the specific procedures taught to enable a devotee to not only understand his relationship with universal processes but also to experience definite spiritual growth. Here, then, is a way for the resolved person to participate in his own soul evolution by eliminating inner restrictions, ordering his life and meditating to expand consciousness and realize God. The meditation techniques enable the devotee to remove attention from distracting circumstances and experience soul awareness. They are scientific procedures; if they are used with diligence, practice will result in spiritual awareness and knowledge of the Infinite.

Kriya Yoga self-transformation methods and meditation procedures were introduced into more public consciousness in the early 1860's, in India, when Lahiri Mahasaya was permitted by his guru Mahavatar Babaji to share the teachings with deserving truth seekers. Later, in 1920, my guru Paramahansa Yogananda came to America and began his 32-year teaching mission which resulted in more than 100,000 persons being personally initiated into Kriya practices. As with any teaching endeavor, only a modest percentage of those given instruction remained faithful to their practices, but

among those who were dedicated many attained a high degree of illumination.

I was initiated into Kriya Yoga meditation by Paramahansaji in 1950 and was ordained to teach in 1951. Paramahansaji told me, "Now, thousands are seeking God, but in the near future millions will seek God-realization." His prophecy has come true.

For over a century a number of men and women in the West have been teaching a more transcendental understanding of life. Ralph Waldo Emerson and several of his peers in New England were strongly influenced by their reading of the *Bhagavad Gita* and other translations of Eastern scripture. Christian Science, Unity, Divine Science, Religious Science and other groups with a similar "new era" emphasis emerged into public consciousness and have had a positive, far-reaching influence. In recent decades a variety of "new age" movements have proliferated and techniques to induce altered states of consciousness have been researched and promoted. What has often been lacking (although not always) has been a clear understanding of the complete operations of consciousness and practical ways to facilitate psychological and spiritual growth. A comprehensive philosophy of life based on realized truth about the nature of consciousness, God, soul, and world processes provides the foundations for experiencing spiritual growth in the Kriya tradition. By understanding the categories of cosmic manifestation, by knowing how (and why) to live in harmony with natural laws, by understanding the metaphysics of consciousness and applying the principles, and by exploring inner realms of consciousness during superconscious meditation practice, one can progress as far on the spiritual path as one's commitment will allow.

With partial commitment, partial results are likely to be experienced. With more dedicated practice, advanced spiritual growth will occur. With total commitment, liberation of consciousness can be experienced in this present life-cycle.

The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof: the world, and they that dwell therein.

THE BOOK OF PSALMS 24:1

Lifestyle Guidelines

LIVING IN HARMONY WITH THE RHYTHMS OF NATURE

How we choose to live reveals our depth of understanding. According to how we see ourselves in relationship to the world and others, and what we believe our purpose in life is, determine the choices we make.

How do you see yourself in relationship to the world? How do you see yourself in relationship to others? How do you see yourself in relationship to God? What is your purpose in life? Answer these questions honestly and you will know why you do what you do.

Your way of viewing the world and your relationships is based on your perception of yourself. How do you see yourself? Do you see yourself as a restricted human being beset by challenge and limitation at every turn, or do you see yourself as you really are: a spiritual being with almost unlimited capacities? The former self-view is only an opinion based on misunderstanding. The latter realization is the result of self-honest acknowledgement of what is true about you.

We are not in this world for ourselves. We are here to unfold our innate potential and serve the cause of evolution; that is, we are here to become completely enlightened and to do God's will. Along life's pathway we can enjoy the journey, enjoy relationships and discover that living consciously is the purpose of our being here. To live consciously is to live in harmony with the rhythms of Nature. To live consciously is to know the purpose of life and to experience its fulfillment. There are practical things we can do to help ourselves live as we are meant to live and to choose to do these things will definitely result in personal satisfaction and God-realization.

Come to terms with yourself and your world and let knowledge and experience of God be the guiding factor in your life. In this way, be motivated to choose a lifestyle which is fully supportive of your highest aspirations, your worthy purposes and spiritual growth. If all choices are made with these ideals in mind, your total lifestyle will be wholesome and entirely constructive.

Be Very Clear in Your Mind About Your Major Purpose in Life

Write a *well defined, clear statement* which declares your major purpose for being in this world. Work on this until you are entirely satisfied that your written description accurately reveals your soul-inspired desire and intention. Do this before you do anything else.

Once you are clear about your major purpose, all other choices you make should support it. This will enable you to more easily eliminate nonessentials and focus on essentials, thus allowing your major purpose to be fulfilled as effortlessly as possible. From now on, if you remain conscious and attentive to your high resolve, life will flow more smoothly for you. You will be healthier, happier, more prosperous in every way, more creatively productive, and increasingly Self-realized.

Now that you have defined your major purpose in life, follow through by doing whatever is necessary to allow yourself to learn, grow in understanding and proceed with enthusiasm. To be *enthused* is to experience "God-insideness" (*en*, "in" and *theos*, "god"). But even with high resolve, if self-defeating circumstances are allowed to prevail, progress will be difficult. Therefore, carefully examine the following recommendations and implement constructive behavior immediately.

Learn to Live with Minimum Stress

We are stressed when we are under pressure, or experience strain or resistance. Accumulated stress contributes to mental confusion, emotional unrest and physical problems. Some obvious symptoms of physical stress are psychological disturbance, headaches, back pain and pain in various parts of the body, poor digestion, constipation, a variety of mild or major physical disorders for which organic causes cannot be found, tiredness, depression, sexual dysfunction, diminished eyesight and impaired sensory perception in general, and more. Of particular interest to persons on a self-actualization and spiritual growth path is the fact that stress interferes with psychological transformation and the processing of vital forces and consciousness itself. Stress weakens the immune system, speeds up the aging process and obviously interferes with other efforts we might make to

enhance life processes and expand consciousness.

To successfully manage stress, acquire a clear understanding of yourself and your relationship to life and God. This will enable you to make right choices and enjoy peace of mind. You will be better able to relate to others and the environment with an even-minded attitude and thus avoid emotional upset and conflict. We can meditate, exercise and do other useful things, but if our understanding is impaired and our emotions are not regulated most of our attempts to manage stress will be efforts to cope with the problem rather than to solve it. So, understanding and attitude are of primary importance. Other supportive practices are:

1. *Daily Meditation* – Meditate on a regular schedule for the relaxation benefits. Sitting for 20 minutes a day, in the correct way, can contribute significantly to our being able to reduce stress, refresh the nervous system and enliven the body with vital force. A twice a day schedule for this purpose is more useful: in the morning before beginning the day's activities and in the evening to release stress accumulated by the pressures of work or emotional unrest.

2. *Avoid Environmental Stress-Causing Circumstances* – When at all possible, avoid noisy, chaotic, purposeless environments and situations. Even if you feel you are handling challenge well, external pressures can result in internal stress build-up which may not be immediately noticed. See that your home environment is nurturing and well-ordered. Arrange working conditions to suit your needs. Avoid prolonged relationships which cause emotional upset. When you peruse the media to learn of local, national or international news events, process the information with discernment so as not to be emotionally disturbed. Do what you can to assist your world in the direction of order and wellness while remaining inwardly calm and rational.

Provide for yourself clean air to breathe, pure water to drink and clean, nutritious foods to eat. Even houses and other dwellings which are climate controlled and insulated from outside air may be more contaminated by dust and chemical exudation than the outside environment. Electrical appliances can also create magnetic fields which are possibly harmful to the body.

3. *Exercise and Rest* – Maintain a regular routine of exercise, creative activity and rest. Brisk walking and other stimulating ex-

ercise routines will contribute to muscle tone, improved function of internal organs and systems and a higher energy level. Hatha Yoga practice is especially useful for stress reduction, enlivening body systems and improving soul-mind-body coordination. Go to bed early and awaken early, using the early morning hours for devotional practices and meditation. Sleep as many hours as needed, no more and no less.

4. *Diet and Nutrition* – Choose a natural food plan. A vegetarian diet is best. Grains, vegetables, legumes and fruits comprise the ideal diet for human beings. Find out which foods are most suitable to your personal needs and adhere to a sensible nutrition program. Avoid meat and animal fats, overly processed foods, white sugar, salt and other additives which have little or no nutritional value. Eating does not have to be a complicated process. Consume what is necessary and avoid overeating. Waste products are the result of unassimilated foods and these clog the body's systems as well as deplete vital forces.

5. *Remain Focused on Your Purpose* – Include in your lifestyle those behaviors and relationships which are useful to your ultimate ends and eliminate behaviors and relationships which are not useful. Whatever restricts functional living and psychological and spiritual growth should be examined and removed from your life. Routine social relationships and activities which are not entirely constructive should be renounced. Health problems should be solved. Psychological conflicts should be resolved. Economic limitations should be overcome by cultivating a prosperity consciousness and opening ways for life to abundantly provide for your needs. Any area of your life where the flow is impeded can contribute to stress and a reduction in wellness and creativity.

6. *Be Service Oriented* – Think always in terms of service. Nature provides you with everything you need for comfortable, successful living. Once you learn to be open to the goodness of the universe all you have to do then is be dedicated to serving the cause of evolution. Start where you are by being kind and supportive to others. Radiate your clear consciousness and good will into the field of collective consciousness shared by all living things. If you are employed, choose a work situation which enables you to render useful service to society. If you are self-employed, be sure that what you do has entirely constructive outcomes for others and the planet. Use a portion of your income, in any case, to support worthwhile social, cultural and

spiritual causes. This will not only satisfy your need to feel yourself to be a useful participant in life's processes, it will open you even more to higher states of consciousness. Since you are here to serve the cause of evolution, do so.

7. *Let Love be Your Guide* – Respect yourself as the spiritual being you are; love God as your higher True Self; love all people by seeing their divine qualities and by serving them and assisting them in the direction of their highest good; and express your love for Planet Earth by nurturing rather than exploiting its resources. When you love yourself, you will be good to yourself and do everything you can to assist yourself to wellness and spiritual growth. When you love God, you will attend to your spiritual practices and cultivate a conscious relationship with God. When you love all people, you will know them as your brothers and sisters in a common cause. When you relate to the planet with respect, you will experience its support as well as fulfill your duty to future generations. You may come this way again, if you reincarnate, and if you do not, billions of souls who do come here will thank you for your kindness in providing them a healthy, supportive environment.

Nothing belongs to you. Even your life is not your own: it is God's because God's light is expressing as you. Therefore, train yourself to see everything in proper perspective and your chosen lifestyle will reflect your perception and understanding.

Choose to Live Righteously
and Useful Outcomes Will Result

To live righteously is to live correctly, in harmony with Nature's laws, while fulfilling personal duties and being open to grace, which, in the end, assists us to experience the fulfillment of soul destiny.

When we know how to live, what prevents us from living as we should? Lack of commitment prevents us from putting into practice what we know is right for us. We may know our purpose, we may have knowledge of how to proceed, but without commitment few beneficial changes will occur. What is needed is clear purpose backed by surrendered dedication and complete participation. It's easy to rationalize, to procrastinate and to complain that we cannot help ourselves for one reason or another. Heavy karma, past incidents of trauma, previous failures, unfriendly planetary aspects, a variety of addic-

tions—all of these excuses, and more, can be put forward. But the major self-limiting cause for failure to do what needs to be done, is lack of commitment due to disinterest.

The possibilities before us are so great! The opportunities to serve are so varied! A few decades ago the percentage of God-thirsty souls was minimal. Today it is much larger and very soon it will be impressively more so. But we cannot be inspiring role models for others if we are not living righteously. We cannot really help others to maturity and spiritual awareness if we are not mature and spiritually aware. We are not here alone, for our actions and our states of consciousness influence the whole of society and all of creation. So you see how necessary it is for us to be purposeful and committed.

If your present lifestyle is already fully supportive of your worthy purposes and spiritual growth, maintain your course in life. If it is not, make right choices now. I know your future is wonderful.

If you love yourself, you love everybody else as you do yourself. As long as you love another person less than you love yourself, you will not succeed in loving yourself; but if you love all alike, including yourself, you will love them as one person and that person is both God and man.

MEISTER ECKHART (1260 - 1327)
Sermons

The Light, Life and Love of God—which are all the same thing really—are aspects of His being, His living Presence, and will be disclosed in the silence to each soul according to its capacity and need.

EVELYN UNDERHILL (1875 - 1941)
The Fruits of the Spirit

Roy Eugene Davis at the altar in the Meditation Hall at Center for Spiritual Awareness headquarters. Devotees from all over the world come here to learn, to meditate and to be encouraged on the spiritual path.

Portraits (left to right) represent Mahavatar Babaji, Lahiri Mahasaya, Jesus, Sri Yukteswar and Paramahansa Yogananda. With emphasis on the Kriya Yoga tradition, CSA honors all authentic enlightenment traditions and welcomes all sincere spiritual aspirants.

When by means of realization of the Self as it really is, as with a lamp, an integrated man sees the true nature of Supreme Reality, the unborn, undying God, the Pure beyond every essence as it really exists, and knowing him, he will be released from all fetters.

THE UPANISHADS

Meditation for Personal Benefits and God-Communion

Every person desirous of spiritual growth, mental acuity, psychological maturity, physical wellness and an open relationship with the universe, should meditate *correctly* on a regular schedule. It is the one practice most useful to improving and maintaining function on all levels of personal expression.

Meditation contributes to spiritual growth by reducing stress, clearing the mental field and providing the meditator the opportunity to directly experience clear awareness, superconscious states and perceptions of higher reality.

Mental clarity is facilitated by meditation as thought processes become refined and then dormant, while conscious awareness is maintained. As a result, superconscious forces act upon mental contents, weakening and dissolving destructive drives and habits. The intellectual faculty is cleared, allowing more accurate analysis of a subject and valid determination. Intuition, the soul's faculty of knowing-by-knowing, is awakened and allowed to operate without interference from restless thoughts and random moods.

Psychological maturity is encouraged as a result of mental and emotional patterns being better organized, episodes of self-honest awareness to be experienced, and insights into higher purpose being increasingly evident. With psychological maturity self-responsible behavior becomes natural.

Physical wellness is inclined to be actualized because of stress reduction, deep rest given to internal organs and nervous system, and because the self-responsible practice of meditation usually inspires one to also live a more natural, balanced life. Meditation can be practiced as preparation for intentional creative visualization, and attitude and consciousness adjustment for the purpose of awak-

ening and releasing the body's healing forces.

A more open relationship with the universe results when meditative perceptions result in an obvious understanding that the universe is consciousness in manifestation and is entirely benevolent and supportive. Also, with self-discovery, knowledge of real purpose motivates the devotee to establish priorities and enter into a meaningful, loving relationship with the world. An understanding of metaphysical laws makes it easier for us to accomplish our purposes creatively and enjoyably.

Systematic research over the past few decades has verified the claims of seers who have long taught that meditation strengthens the body's immune system and slows biological aging processes. Meditators are, as a whole, healthier, happier, more creative and more youthful than their calendar age.

Meditation as a Procedure

While a few people are able to meditate spontaneously by merely by being inclined to do so, most beginning meditators find it helpful to use psycho-physiological (mind-body) techniques to induce relaxation and inward concentration. Several such techniques will be explained in these Lesson Guides.

Please do not confuse (or mix procedures) with any other system of mental conditioning, self-suggestion, hypnotic or visualization method you may know or have heard about. Meditation as taught here is a simple, conscious approach to experiencing pure consciousness. In fact, the contemplation of pure consciousness is the highest meditation process and takes attention directly to the source, to the experience of existence-being.

In this approach, any technique or procedure which includes visualization and other preliminary practices for the purpose of enabling the meditator to begin where he is and move on from there, will eventually result in techniques and procedures being transcended when they are no longer necessary for the purposes intended.

Hundreds of thousands of people are today meditating for personal benefits even if enlightenment is not their professed aim. They generally report that they feel better and function more efficiently as a result of daily meditation. Physicians are increasingly prescribing meditation practice to help their patients reduce stress, lower high

blood pressure, manage pain, remove themselves from dependency upon drugs and other substances, be more emotionally stable, experience a higher energy level and improve self-esteem. For these and other purposes meditation is extremely helpful.

Approach meditation practice as the relaxed, enjoyable process it is. It is your opportunity to withdraw attention from mundane concerns, and contemplate perfect peace, soul satisfaction and the possibility of experiencing a relationship with God.

Meditation sessions of fifteen to thirty minutes once or twice a day are suitable for the purpose of experiencing deep relaxation and inner refreshment and to maintain your attunement with life. Longer sessions, thirty minutes to an hour or more, are useful for deeper meditation practice and for profound contemplation.

The environment should be clean and quiet, with no possibility of external distractions interfering. This can be a bedroom or any suitable place. If possible, a meditation shrine area can be consecrated for your devotional practices.

Regularity is important. Make an agreement with yourself to meditate at the same time every day and keep that agreement because your time alone with God is the most important interlude of the day.

If your approach to meditation and contemplation is to pray and then sit in the silence, and this works for you, continue in this manner. If you need a meditation technique to improve concentration and avoid involvement with thought processes, memories, illusory perceptions or emotional influences, then use the procedure which is most result-producing. A simple yet effect technique is mantra. A meditation mantra is a pleasant sound introduced into the mind to provide a focus for concentration and remove attention from mental, emotional and physical distractions. If you have a mantra which serves your purpose, use it. If not, use the word *God*, or *OM*, or *OM God*. These words used as mantras attract our attention to superconscious levels of perception. When the mantra is no longer needed, let it drop away and continue to remain absorbed in the tranquil silence, contemplating God and the field of pure consciousness. Here is a comfortable meditation routine:

1. *Sit Upright* – Inhale and exhale two or three times, breathing in and out a little more deeply than usual to provide oxygen to the blood and cleanse it of carbon. Let your breathing flow naturally and turn your attention inward to the space between the eyebrows, the spiritual eye center. Gaze into the distance of inner space without letting your eyes move around. Steady gazing contributes to easy concentration.

2. *Be Open to the Infinite* – Let your thoughts turn Godward. Remind yourself that you are a spiritual being and that contemplating divine possibilities is natural to you. Inwardly acknowledge God, the all pervading intelligence of the universe, and your own innate spiritual qualities. Think of God with love. Devotional meditation usually results in satisfying perceptions. If you pray, pray at this time in your own audible or mental words. Surrender into the silence and meditate if the process unfolds spontaneously. Otherwise, being aware of your breathing rhythm let the word *God* (or the mantra of your choice) float in your mind as you breath in, and let the mantra float in the mind as you breathe out. Do not regulate the breath, just let it flow, listening to the mental sound of the mantra with inhalation and exhalation. As you become more calm, your breathing will become slower and more refined and your thought processes will likewise become more refined.

3. *Continue to Meditate* – Use your mantra for as long as it is needed, then let it cease as you continue to look into the spiritual eye and listen with your inner ear to any subtle sounds which might arise. Let meditative calm be the predominant experience. Meditate until your time is up or until you feel inclined to conclude the practice session. If you meditate for a predetermined duration of time, sit until that duration has been completed. If you feel inclined to let meditation extend beyond your usual time to conclude, and it is convenient to do so, remain absorbed in contemplation until you feel like ending the session. Sometimes you will rather quickly flow into a tranquil meditative state while, at other times, it may take longer to accomplish your purposes. Just be patient with yourself and meditate without fail as agreed upon.

4. *After Meditation* – Sit for a few minutes in meditative calm to allow the calmness to be integrated with thought processes and feelings. If you want to pray for others or engage in possibility-thinking or problem-solving, this is the time to do it because you will

be more mentally clear and objective. You will be more God conscious. When inclined, go about your usual daily routine.

If you will cultivate a "love affair" with God, your meditation sessions will be more enjoyable and more fruitful. Follow-up studies on the habits of meditators indicate that persons who meditate only for personal benefits tend to stop their practice after reasonable benefits have been experienced, while persons who meditate for spiritual growth purposes tend to remain committed to their meditation routine. One's choice of how God is conceptualized and related to, is personal. Whatever inner relationship that satisfies the heart is suitable. With spiritual growth one's understanding of God and relationship with God will become more clear and increasingly real.

How to Remove Obstacles to Meditation Success

A few obstacles to success in meditation practice are: bodily discomfort or movement, mental restlessness, emotional instability, disturbance due to memories surfacing in the mind, illusory perceptions and sleep.

Sit in a relaxed posture and do not move unless to make adjustments for bodily comfort. Awareness will soon be withdrawn from body awareness.

Mental restlessness will cease as you proceed with your practice, remaining intently focused on your meditation ideal and using your preferred meditation technique. As breathing becomes slower and more refined, mental processes will become more orderly and refined and emotional calm will be experienced.

Avoid the temptation to daydream or to review memories by remembering the purpose of meditation. Illusory perceptions, mental images and the like, should be renounced in favor of concentrated attention.

Meditate when rested rather than when sleepy. Even so, if sleep begins to occur when you relax, keep your attention at the spiritual eye, be sure you are sitting erect, and move past that temporary phase of consciousness adjustment.

If meditation practice is approached with inspirational resolve, it will be easier to flow inward and more quickly achieve calm superconscious states.

Meditation is Your Passport
to Transcendental Perceptions

When traveling, a passport enables you to move freely to the countries of your destination; likewise, meditation enables you to move easily through preliminary states of consciousness to superconscious states and beyond.

How far you go on your spiritual journey is determined by your resolve. A little progress can be experienced, exceptional progress can be chosen and actualized, or you can complete your spiritual growth in your present incarnation.

Instead of remaining imprisoned in limiting states of consciousness, let yourself expand awareness and transcend all limitations. Initial superconscious states may be influenced by thoughts and mental images, and emotions. Gradually, mental images and emotions will be transcended and clear superconscious states experienced. Adjustments in states of consciousness should reflect as useful changes in behavior and general pattern of experience. Regular meditation practice, while strongly influential in contributing to inner transformation and psychological growth, must be supported by our conscious intention to help ourselves be disciplined and appropriate in all circumstances. To enjoy meditative calm and then to resume conditioned behavior and again assume unclear states of consciousness will not result in rapid beneficial changes. It is during the remaining waking hours, when we are not meditating, that learning opportunities are presented to enable us to choose the higher way to live.

In future issues of this Lesson Guide series, more specific meditation guidelines will be shared, along with advanced meditation techniques to use to explore higher states of consciousness, contribute to mastery of mental states and vital forces and to encourage physiological transformation so that the brain and nervous system can process transcendental states more easily.

If you are a beginning meditator, use the processes as they are here taught in order to become proficient in practice and to experience progressive spiritual growth. If you are more advanced in practice, adapt the procedures to your usual routine as well as review what is taught to improve your meditation skills.

Successful practice of the procedures given over the next several months will provide you with sufficient experience and knowledge to

request initiation in the advanced Kriya Yoga meditation techniques. The process leading to this, as well as what initiation involves, will be explained as we proceed. If you are already an initiate, use this material to review your practices to be sure you are providing yourself the opportunities you deserve to continue your inner growth.

CONSECRATING A HOME MEDITATION SHRINE

Where the heart is, thoughts and behavior will follow. It can be helpful to provide for yourself outer support for your inner contemplations. For this, the consecration of a home meditation shrine is recommended. To *consecrate* is "to make or declare sacred; set apart or dedicate to the service of the Deity." Also, "to devote or dedicate for some special purpose."

A small table or any convenient item of furniture can be used as an altar. An altar is "a place where man meets God." On your home altar have pictures of saints or any items which may contribute to the awakening of your devotional nature. Perhaps also, have your favorite scripture or study materials. Have a comfortable chair, or meditation mat if you sit on the floor when you meditate.

When you first prepare your home shrine, arrange everything to suit your own personal taste, then pray, speaking aloud in your own heartfelt words. Affirm that you are consecrating this special place for the purpose of meditation and God-communion. Use your personal shrine only for the purpose to which it is dedicated. Daily, enter your shrine area to pray and meditate. As you do, leave all of your secular and personal concerns behind. Go there pure in mind and heart, only for the purpose of merging in the Infinite.

As you meditate there on a regular schedule, the environment will become charged with spiritualized energies which will beneficially influence you, as well as radiate throughout your home.

If your home is spacious enough, you may set aside a room for your place of worship, as well as use it for your daily hatha yoga routine prior to meditation practice. Later, as you become proficient in meditation practice, this room could also be used for weekly, or occasional, group meditation with friends chosen for this purpose.

Personal Comprehension Review

This review and recommended practice routine is for your personal use. Go over the lesson material to be assured of complete comprehension and practice the procedures to allow yourself further learning as a result of experience.

1. Why is the enlightenment path referred to as "the path of Light?"

2. Why are we not alone in the universe?

3. Why do civilizations develop and decline?

4. What is the meaning of *kriya*?

5. Write the definition of Kriya Yoga found in the Yoga Sutras.

6. What are some of the obvious symptoms of accumulated stress?

7. What does it mean to live righteously?

8. How does meditation contribute to spiritual growth?

9. What is meditation, as taught in this lesson?

10. If you have difficulty meditating, write your challenges then write possible solutions to solving the problem.

11. If you need motivation to begin a regular meditation schedule, write a list of all of the benefits to be experienced as a result of regular, correct meditation practice.

Recommended Supplemental Reading

The following books by Roy Eugene Davis may be ordered through your usual book source or direct from Center for Spiritual Awareness.

Life Surrendered in God: Chapter One, "The Eternal Way."
All Things Possible: The complete text, using the planning charts.
An Easy Guide to Meditation: Especially for beginning meditators, but also for meditators who wish to review the basic procedures.

My Major Purpose in Life

1. In a quiet place, alone and in a meditative mood, write a *well defined, clear statement* which declares your major purpose for being in this world.

2. What are you willing to do to allow yourself to experience the fulfillment of your major purpose?

3. What do you need to do to increase your knowledge and ability in order to accomplish your worthy purpose?

4. If there are any known obstacles before you, write them clearly and write solutions to the problems.

5. Go over this list of lifestyle choices to support your worthy purposes and your spiritual growth. (Be sure to follow through and do these things.)

a. Write your daily meditation schedule:

b. What do you do to minimize the accumulation of stress?

c. What is your exercise routine?

d. What is your sleep, rest and relaxation routine?

e. What is your nutritional program?

f. What do you do to help yourself remain focused and on purpose?

g. What kind of service do you intentionally render?

h. What else can you think of doing that would be helpful?

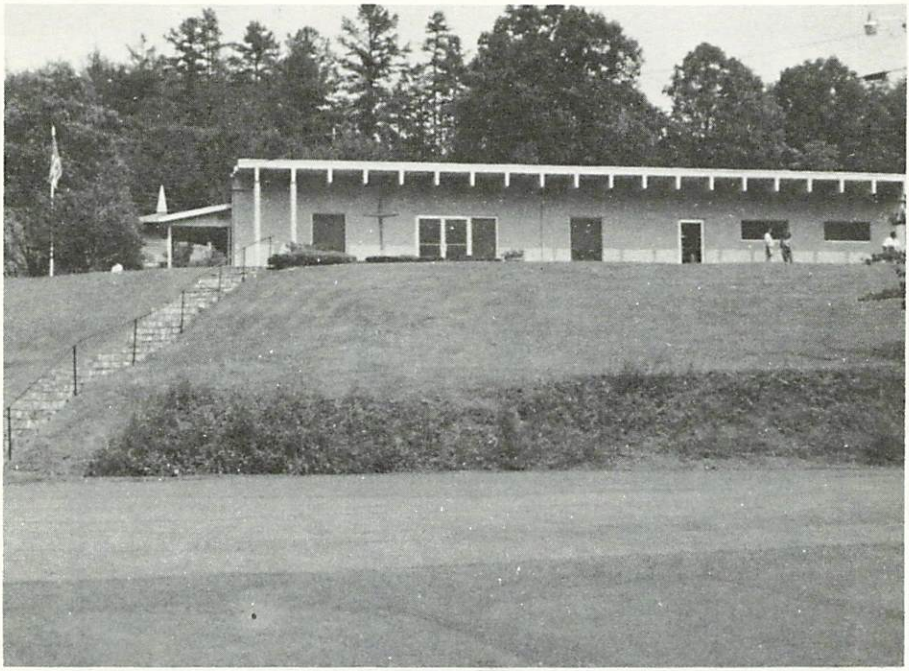
Addendum

To obtain highest benefits from these *Studies in Truth Lesson Guides* it is important that your progress be orderly and progressive. For this reason they are provided at planned intervals, to allow time to assimilate the information and practice the recommended procedures. Should you fall behind in your studies, preserve your Lesson Guides in a convenient place and study them in sequence.

These materials are provided on a donation basis. Center for Spiritual Awareness members receive them free because of their regular financial participation in making possible the maintenance and growth of this ministry. Non-members who have chosen to receive the Lessons on an annual or regular donation basis are self-responsible for donating on schedule to assure their regular reception. Donation reminders are not sent by our office. Should you for any reason cease receiving the Lessons and wish to resume them, please let us know the issue number of the last Lesson received so that we can continue where you left off.

Should you plan an address change, let us know at least four weeks ahead of time so our mailing records can be changed. Items returned to us by the post office because of an incorrect address are not remailed unless a request is made.

Studies in Truth Lesson Guides are for the confidential use of persons who request them. If your friends or associates are interested in receiving these materials, it is recommended that you refer them to our offices. Use the address as listed on the contents page of this issue.



Center for Spiritual Awareness is a new era enlightenment movement with international headquarters and retreat center in the low mountains of northeast Georgia. Here, on an eleven acre site are the offices, meeting hall and dining room, meditation temple, library, and guest houses for retreat participants. Branch centers are located in several U.S. cities, Europe and West Africa.

CSA's teaching emphasis is that it is possible for every caring person, through right personal effort and God's grace, to live a mature, meaningful and spiritually fulfilled life. The "great commission" is to utilize all practical means to share this helpful message with every responsive person. The major purpose is individual and planetary enlightenment.

Roy Eugene Davis is the spiritual director of CSA. He is a direct disciple of Paramahansa Yogananda and has been teaching in the Kriya Yoga tradition since 1951.

Blessed Quiet Time, Alone with God

The One Hour a Day that Makes the Difference

What is the single most important relationship we can have? Our relationship with God is the most important one. What can we do to help ourselves have this relationship? We can make a daily appointment with God and keep it during our quiet time when we study about God and commune with the Infinite during meditation.

Schedule a specific interlude each day when you will retire from outer relationships and give yourself to study, prayer, meditation and surrendered contemplation of God. Allow at least one hour for this purpose—longer if you can.

It is true that we are always in God and that God's life nourishes us and grace provides for us. But until we are ever conscious of God and the activity of grace, we need to withdraw now and then from externals and give ourselves completely over to study and inner examination.

Your one hour a day quiet time will anchor you in the Infinite, maintain you on a steady course in life and refresh your soul.

– Roy Eugene Davis

CENTER FOR SPIRITUAL AWARENESS
STUDIES IN TRUTH LESSON GUIDE
MASTER COURSE NUMBER TWO

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God and the Cosmic Process

KNOWING THAT BY WHICH ALL THINGS ARE KNOWN

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.
THE FIRST BOOK OF MOSES CALLED GENESIS 1: 1-4

Contents

God and the Cosmic Process 3

An examination of the creative process and the categories of cosmic manifestation. Essential understanding for persons on the enlightenment path, to provide an overview and as a preview of what is to finally known and experienced.

Lifestyle Guidelines 14

A preliminary perusal of Ayurveda, the holistic wellness approach which enables one to balance mental and physical systems by harmonizing with cosmic forces. The first in a series to afford personal evaluation and participation.

Meditation and Superconscious 23

The higher purpose of meditation practice is to experience superconscious states leading to further contemplation and higher realizations. Also, how to practice advanced mantra meditation.

Personal Comprehension Review 30

COVER: Nataraja dancing the dance of creation

Studies in Truth Lesson Guides are published and distributed by Center for Spiritual Awareness for private use and guided study supervised by acknowledged CSA ministers, teachers and group leaders. Prepared and written by Roy Eugene Davis as an examination of the enlightenment process, with emphasis on the traditions, philosophy and practice of Kriya Yoga. Center for Spiritual Awareness, Post Office Box 7, Lake Rabun Road, Lakemont, Georgia 30552 (U.S.A.). In West Africa: Center for Spiritual Awareness, Post Office Box 507, Accra, Ghana.

The unmanifest field is the origin of all things and forms proceed from it. True disciples on the path contemplate pure consciousness and surrender their sense of independent self, enlighten each other with constructive words, and remain content in the realization of Truth. Out of compassion for devotees spirit banishes the darkness from human consciousness with the light of itself.

BHAGAVAD GITA 10:9-11

God and the Cosmic Process

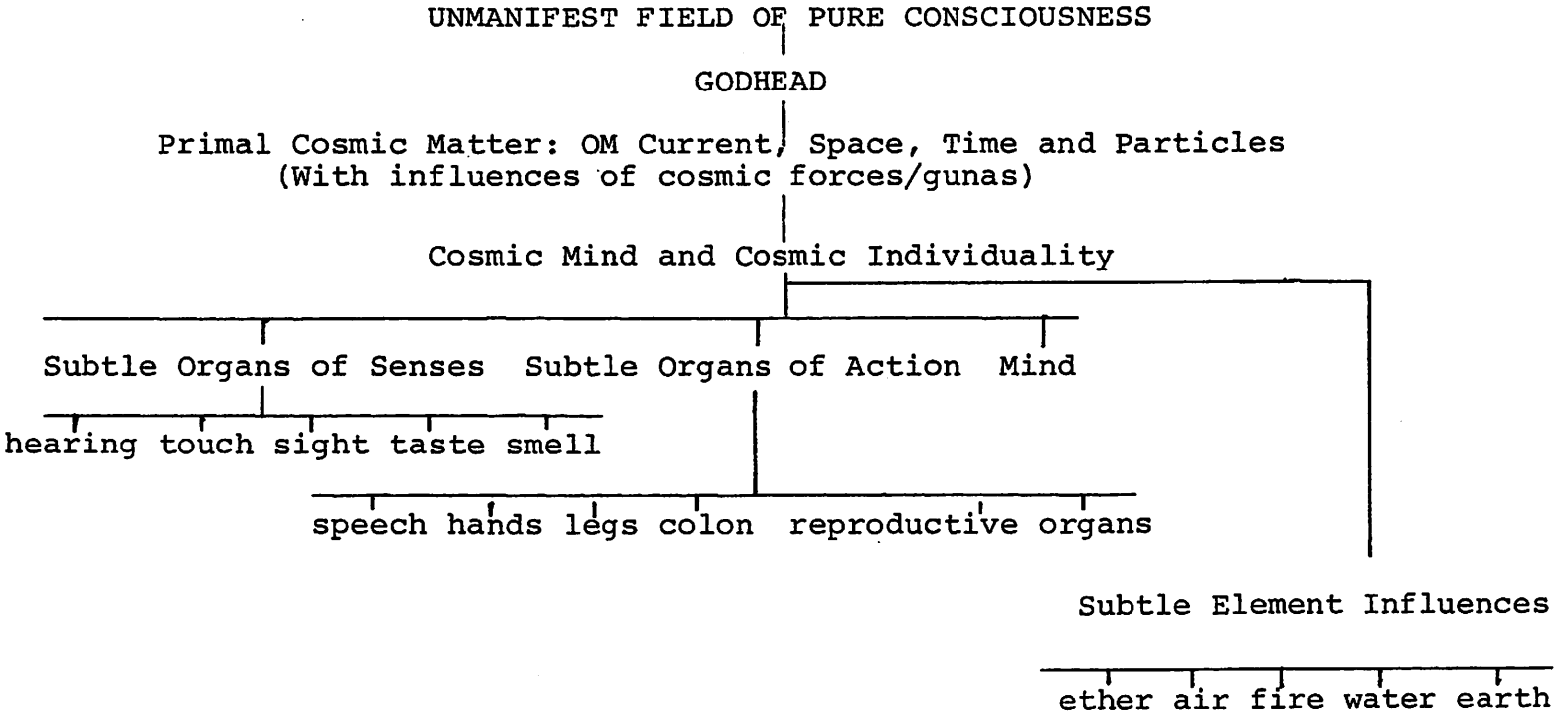
KNOWING THAT BY WHICH ALL THINGS ARE KNOWN

In our enlightenment tradition a new truth student's education begins with an examination of the nature of Supreme Consciousness, God and cosmic processes. There are two reasons for this: 1) There is always the possibility that even a novice seeker, upon being clearly informed of the facts of life, will experience dramatic spiritual awakening and its resulting insights. 2) Even if the explanation of cosmic processes is not immediately understood, the devotee at least has an intellectual grasp of what is true about life and what is to be sooner or later realized. One will then know the purpose of spiritual practice and be able to avoid involvements with philosophical theories which are not supported by facts and with procedures which cannot result in satisfying conclusions.

What is here explained has been revealed to seers of many cultures and can be likewise revealed to every person. Careful intellectual examination of this overview of consciousness and life processes will result in advanced understanding. Intuitive perception will make possible actual knowing. Remember that knowledge is grounded in consciousness and you, being a unit of consciousness specialized, have within you knowledge of the universe and its origins.

With the understanding that consciousness is the only reality and that there is nothing but it, unmanifested and in manifestation, let us proceed to examine its categories to see how the cosmic process expresses as the universe.

Chart of Cosmic Manifestation



God is the Being, Life, Power and Manifesting Substance of the Universe

1. *The Unmanifest Field* – Variously referred to as the field of pure consciousness, Supreme Consciousness, the Absolute or the Transcendental Field. It is pure, unmodified existence without beginning and without ending. It is the source of all manifestation and, being conscious, it is self-aware and self-knowledgeable. It is unbounded; that is, outside of the field of spacetime. The total experience of it is *nirvana* ("awareness without mental modifications or external relationships"), *nirbikalpa samadhi* ("full realization without conceptual support"); therefore, complete enlightenment. It is the cause of manifestation while remaining uninvolved with it. It is approachable and experienceable by a devotee but does not actively intervene in the affairs of man or Nature. It is not completely knowable by mental faculties but can be directly experienced by the soul, because the soul is itself a unit of pure consciousness, as a reflected ray of God. It is the origin of God and, through God, makes possible the worlds.

2. *God, Initial Manifest Consciousness-Substance* – The Godhead is the outward particularized expansion of pure consciousness, with attributes and characteristics which are discernable. As existence, God is conscious or aware. With modifying attributes God is the substance of which the universe is formed. The modifying attributes are three in number and are the result of polarity: illuminating, revealing and manifesting attribute; moving and transforming attribute; and veiling and forming aspect. In Sanskrit these are referred to, respectively, as *sattwa, rajas,* and *tamas.* These three attributes of manifest consciousness are the primal cosmic forces which regulate universal processes. The *gunas* ("ruling, regulating, binding influences") are the triune cosmic forces determining universal manifestation from the Godhead through all spheres and dimensions. They are present and influential in every manifest thing, including our minds and bodies. They are present and influential in the foods we eat. So long as we are involved with the field of Nature at any level, we are subject to the influence of these three attributes innate to consciousness. When they are in a state of equilibrium the Godhead is self-contained and the universes are not manifest. When they are not balanced, the creation (manifesting) process begins and the universes issue forth from the field of God. After trillions of solar years the universe is withdrawn into the field of God for a duration of stillness.

3. *Manifesting Consciousness-Substance* – Due to interactions between cosmic forces, primal substance begins to stir and the process of universal manifestation occurs. In this sphere of manifestation are the four aspects of consciousness which make possible its phenomenal expression: the creative force (OM, AUM, "the Word") which contains infinite potential; space, the field in which events occur; time, the field making possible duration for processes to unfold; fine units of primal substance (particles) of which all forms are comprised. The Sanskrit word for this primal substance is *maya*. It is form-producing and truth-veiling. It manifests Nature and everything in the field of Nature. Souls identified with it without understanding, are subject to making errors in perception, thus do not see behind it to its cause and origin. The phenomenal realms are not an illusion. They are real because consciousness is manifesting *as* them, but they appear illusory when the subjective side of Nature is not known or perceived. Some people, with a scant understanding of how the universe functions, falsely assume that "since the world is an illusion" there is little purpose in paying much attention to it. They do not know that the universe has a purpose, as the realm for spiritually unwakened souls to pursue the enlightenment path and to learn the meaning of life. Therefore, the universe should be understood and related to with wisdom.

4. *Individualization of Consciousness* – As the manifesting substance of consciousness becomes self-involved and self-expressive as the phenomenal universe, so do rays of God consciousness become involved with it. This deluded perception of individuality is the basis of egoism, the sense of existence separate from the source. Souls are not separate from the source, but outer involvement causes them to identify with cosmic forces and fine matter and become forgetful of their permanent spiritual condition. This *error in perception* is the cause of all perceptual errors and problems which follow. It is from this deluded condition that souls need to awaken. When this begins to happen, spiritual growth begins. When awakening is complete, one is "born of the spirit" and is no longer restricted by physical, psychological and mental circumstances.

5. *Manifestation of Cosmic Mind* – Cosmic (universal) mind is produced by the actions of the cosmic forces and becomes the creative medium in which cosmic intelligence can relate to cosmic matter, just as the human mind (which is a portion of cosmic mind) is the medium

in which our intelligence can relate to the field of Nature. Cosmic mind is the "one mind common to all embodied beings." We may feel ourselves to be independent beings with a mind of our own. The conditioned mind we know is personalized by our memories, conditionings and thought processes, but it is grounded in cosmic mind. It is also possible for us to have access to the entire field of cosmic mind when our awareness expands sufficiently to allow it.

6-15. *Ten Mind-Matter Connecting Principles* – These effects of cosmic forces provide the basis for our five faculties of sense perception and our five organs of action. Sense faculties are hearing, feeling (touch), sight, smell and taste. The organs of action are those which allow speech (vocal organs and mouth), locomotion (legs and feet), manual skill (hands), generation, and elimination. The effects of interacting cosmic forces produce the subtle influences which result in outer manifestation of these principles which are present to varying degrees in all living things. Vegetable matter, for instance cannot usually freely move from where it is rooted but certain other characteristics of these mind-matter connecting principles are present; likewise, some animals can move from place to place but are limited in the performance of actions which require manual dexterity.

16-20. *The Five Essences of Objects of Perception* – These are expressed as the five element-influences in subtle manifestation which are the objects of sense perception and provide the basis for the material universe. The essence of sound expresses in space, the essence of touch in air, the essence of sight in fire (light), the essence of taste in water (moisture), and the essence of smell in earth or matter.

21-25. *The Five Material Elements* – Subtle element essences further express as ether (fine matter in space), air (gaseous matter), fire (light and heat), water (wetness), and earth (more inert matter). All five element essences are present in every aspect of manifest creation. Four-eighths of an element essence and one-half of the remaining element essences combine to manifest as the element most obvious to perception. For instance, four-eighths portion of water element essence and one-half portion of ether, air, fire, and earth manifests as water to our perception, and so on. And because all element essences are in ether, the remaining material manifestations can emerge from it, giving rise to the statement that "every-

thing comes out of space and eventually returns to space."

This side of the field of the Godhead twenty-four categories of consciousness make possible the manifestation of the material universe. They are, then, nothing more or less than manifesting expressions of God. This is why we declare that God is the only Being, Life, Power, and Substance this side of the unmanifest field of pure consciousness. And the Godhead is grounded in the field of pure consciousness.

The Importance of Clearly Understanding the Nature, Attributes and Function of God

For the average person it is difficult enough to experience a relationship with God and it can be even more difficult if one's understanding is limited and the mind is confused. We often hear comments such as, "To me, God is love," "I like to think of God as a caring father," and "There is too much talk about God as a male being, I prefer to pray to God as a nurturing mother."

If we do not yet fully comprehend the nature of God we can think about and pray to God however we feel inclined. Our simple faith can put us into an operating relationship with God and the insights and revelations may unfold later. What should be avoided is a simplistic acceptance of our seeming inability to understand what and who God is and how God functions. Also to be avoided is emotional conviction based on immature needs and an insistence upon defending it. Because we are reflected rays of God consciousness, knowledge of God is innate and will eventually be actualized.

Now that you know that God's creative force caused the manifestation of the worlds, wherever you are you can know that God is present as the hidden power as well as the expressing forces and forms of Nature. God is not in some far off realm removed from present circumstances. God, being omnipresent, includes the heavens and the earths in His consciousness. God, being omnipotent, is the only manifesting power. God, being omniscient, is simultaneously conscious of everything. God is the cause and sustainer of the universe, the substance of Nature and every unit of life, including you and me. God is around us, within our minds and bodies and specialized as us.

Because of polarity the *being* aspect of God is male and the

creative manifesting force is female. Understanding this, some devotees pray to God as a caring father and others pray to God as a nurturing mother. Still others think of God as the Supreme Being. It is not accurate to speak of God *and* Nature. To be specific it is correct to speak of God beyond Nature and, when manifesting, *as* Nature. However God is real to us at our level of understanding, that will be our approach to God.

A *deist*, for instance, is one who believes in *deism*: a belief in the existence of God on the evidence of reason and Nature only, with rejection of supernatural revelation. In other words, a belief in a creator God who has, since having created, remained indifferent to his creation. An *atheist* denies the existence of God. *Pantheism* is the philosophical view that involves God and creation but denies God's personality. *Theism* is the belief in one God as the creator and ruler of the universe, without rejection of the possibility of supernatural revelation. *Polytheism* includes belief in many forms of God. Some Hindus, for instance, practice polytheism, as do some people of other cultures. An uneducated polytheist might actually believe there to be many gods and goddesses, while a knowledgeable person knows that God is one and can be worshipped in many forms, all of which but represent specific aspects of Deity. The gods and goddesses of devout Hindus are known to represent the diverse cosmic forces and influential characteristics of God.

The triple aspects of expansion (Brahma), maintenance (Vishnu) and dissolution and remanifestation (Shiva) represent the three universal influences of God in relationship with the universe. These aspects are not synonymous with God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit of the Christian tradition. God the Father is God as a supreme being. God the Son is "the only begotten of the Father" or God involved with creation. The Holy Spirit is the enlivening and redemptive aspect of God. The Holy Spirit is sometimes related to the Shiva aspect in that it is also involved with transformation and regeneration. And in the New Testament (*The Gospel According to Saint John* 1: 1) the writer identifies Jesus the Christ with the *Word* (Greek, "logos") in order to portray him as the operant extension of God involved in world manifestation, thus personalizing the creative force and contributing to confusing the minds of some truth students.

A popular symbol of creative power and benevolent action is Shiva Nataraja dancing the dance of creation. Viewed as a lovely

sculpture it is visually stimulating. Seen for what it represents it depicts the majesty and awesomeness of God regulating universal forces as well as ensuring the personal safety and eventual liberation of souls.

Geometrical symbols, *yantras,* are used in many parts of the world to visually represent the play of cosmic forces. Native Americans, North and South, are known for this practice, as are the people of other cultures past and present. A Vedic geometrical pattern, *Sri Yantra,* is used as a focus for contemplating the categories of cosmic manifestation and their influential forces and energies. As a mantra contains the essence of the cosmic forces it represents, so a yantra does this is visual form. Once the meaning of the design is known, the contemplative devotee can use it as a point of focus to remind himself of the structure and workings of the universe as well as to transcend the outer expressions and acquire insight into primal origins and the Absolute.

If you will pray to God, however God is real to you, the full reality of God will be revealed. There may be progressive insights or there may be sudden glimpses, partial or complete. By reading these Lesson Guides and the recommended supplemental materials you will be provided with an intellectual understanding of God as well as information useful to confirm your own discoveries. With progressive spiritual unfoldment you may at times be amazed at what is revealed, but you will not have to be confused because you will have the written guidance of the seers to peruse for reference. Whenever your insights about God occur, compare them with what seers have written to see if your realizations can be validated. In this way you will avoid illusory conclusions and be able to proceed with certainty.

As souls, we are of the nature of God and all of the attributes of God are innate to us. Because we are specialized units of pure consciousness, knowledge is within us. While perhaps identified with mind and body, we are really omnipresent because our larger reality is God. We may forget this when preoccupied with personal relationships or our private thoughts and feelings. The gunas, the cosmic forces which regulate Nature's activities, also influence our thought processes and feelings, contributing to changes in mental attitude and moods. By learning to understand ourselves and the processes occurring in our minds and bodies we can learn to understand cosmic processes. By becoming aware of our soul nature we can

become more aware of the reality of God.

Because we are forever grounded in the universal field of God consciousness the creative power of the universe can flow through us and exceptional abilities can be demonstrated. What is often noticed about spiritually aware people is that they are not only more calm and psychologically mature, they seem to be able to accomplish their purposes more easily and the forces of Nature seem more supportive of them. This is because when we are spiritually aware our thought processes are better organized, our attunement with universal forces is more consistent and we are conscious of a larger dimension of life, a reality which far exceeds that which is ordinarily perceived by the senses alone. With increased spiritual awareness, while relating to personal circumstances, we are inwardly conscious of ourselves as being more cosmic, of living simultaneously in a world of relative appearances and an unbounded field of consciousness which contains and supports it.

Cosmic power, God's power, flows to manifest our wishes when we are attuned with God and wish for righteous circumstances to unfold. We do not have to demand anything of the universe, for the universe is already flowing to provide for itself. Since we are embodied, we are involved with universal processes so we are also provided for by them. The elements of which our bodies are comprised are common to the material universe. Our minds are particularized units of cosmic mind. The energies flowing through us flow through the field of Nature and the galaxies. If we desire useful change in our lives we have but to release mental and emotional attachment to unwanted present conditions and assume a state of consciousness, a new way of being, thinking and knowing, and the universe will cooperate with us. Sometimes desirable changes will occur even when we maintain the old ways of being, thinking and knowing, thus contributing to our experience and enabling us to make an adjustment in attitude and states of consciousness. Or it may be that we are able to experience a temporary change in how we view ourselves in relationship to God and the world and this momentary change in outlook will result in our being able to see and accept new and more desirable possibilities.

Even if we do not seem to be able to help ourselves, if we are not able to actively adjust our mental states and states of consciousness, even if we are not able to change our behavior for the better, if we will desire useful change, if we hope for it and surrender to the Higher

Power, It will respond in transforming ways. It will do for us what we are not able to do for ourselves. You see, the spirit of God is ever moving in the direction of redemptive expression. It moves to balance cosmic forces so that inertia is weakened, purposeless actions are made purposeful and orderly universal operations are expressed and maintained. The spirit of God is moving in us and to the degree that we can surrender to it, necessary changes will result so that its intention can be fulfilled. This is why it is important that we remember that we are not alone in the universe and we are not expected to do everything for ourselves. We should help ourselves to the extent that we can, and when we do our best to help ourselves *something else* becomes influential. That redeeming *something else* is grace, the quickening and fulfilling activity of God's life in and around us.

Our motives for desiring spiritual growth should be pure; that is, we should desire spiritual growth because it is our innate yearning to experience transcendence. We should not desire spiritual growth merely to improve upon our human circumstances, though this will surely happen. It is true that many people begin their spiritual studies because they have needs. They hurt, they are lonely, they are confused, they are impoverished, they are sick, they are weary of superficial routines and relationships. For them, to seek a way out of their limiting circumstances by increasing their spiritual awareness is a beginning on the enlightenment path. As they progress they will acquire understanding and be able to grow from where they are to where they should be. If you are seeking a better understanding of yourself and an improved relationship with God because of present distressing circumstances, let your needs impel you to disciplined study and practice and circumstances will improve. But be sure that you don't neglect your studies and practices after circumstances have improved. Let worthwhile changes inspire you to continue on the awakening path until you are always consciously in the flow of God's grace.

Some people begin their spiritual studies and practices because they want to acquire personal power and influence. They may want to be able to master their circumstances and chart their own course in life. There is nothing wrong with wanting to be more competent in order to live more successfully. There is nothing wrong with wanting to unfold latent abilities and to be able to creatively express

them. What should be avoided, if possible, is egocentric behavior and willfulness because these drives can obscure higher values and contribute to complicating circumstances. To use creative abilities and a degree of higher knowledge while relating almost exclusively at a level of conditioned behavior and relative relationships may result in increased ability to function, to manifest what others consider to be a successful lifestyle. But this, in fact, may be but a more active way of perpetuating an illusory, unsatisfying series of human circumstances. Yes, learn to use your creative abilities. Learn to function. Learn to satisfy legitimate desires and accomplish worthy purposes. Learn to allow your innate soul abilities to unfold. But do everything with an inner sense of being in partnership with God. Pray for guidance. Use your intelligence. Do only what you feel in your heart is right. Be adventuresome. Be courageous. Be willing to learn. Whatever your goals and purposes, think in terms of all outcomes of your actions as being entirely constructive, for you and for everyone involved. And since you are supported by the universe, let Planet Earth be blessed by your sojourn here. Do nothing to disturb the balance of Nature.

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God*." In all that you do, let your motives be pure. Let your thoughts be pure. Let your feelings be pure. Let your actions be righteous. Then proceed with intelligent purpose and trust in God. All unfoldments will then be life-enhancing and spiritually elevating.

**The Gospel According to Saint Matthew* 5:8

The transformation of senses, mind and body is the result of the natural flow of creative forces. The natural flow of creative forces is possible when obstacles to the flow are removed.

YOGA SUTRAS 4: 2,3

Lifestyle Guidelines

LIVING IN HARMONY WITH THE RHYTHMS OF NATURE

Healthy, long life has value to us because it enables us to fulfill our purposes and experience spiritual growth while embodied.

Choose to be self-responsible for your own wellness and do your best to cooperate with Nature's laws. The advice of a qualified person may be obtained if help is required in removing the causes of distress which interfere with function. By learning to understand the underlying causes of spiritual discontent, psychological imbalance and physical disharmony, it is possible to be open to Nature's healing processes, avoid illness and disease and maintain total health.

A sensible, holistic approach to wellness and longevity for the purpose of fulfilling destiny is the time-tested system of *Ayurveda* (Sanskrit, *ayus* "Life," *veda* "knowledge"). It is considered to be "revealed knowledge," having its source in the field of pure consciousness, the abode of all knowledge. References to Ayurveda are found in the *Rig Veda*, the oldest body of religious-philosophical scripture yet discovered. The word *veda* means "to know." The ancient compilations which are considered to be the primary sources are *Rig Veda, Sama Veda, Yajur Veda* and *Artharva Veda*. Once thought to be a collection of poetry and ritual, it is becoming increasingly obvious that these treatises contain the essence of knowledge about how consciousness expresses in and as the field of Nature. Because they are considered to be the result of revelation, they can only be fully comprehended from an enlightened state of consciousness. The unenlightened can study available commentaries as well as learn from persons already informed.

The *Ayurveda*, the original text, is a subordinate scripture emphasizing the theme of wellness, medicine, longevity and balanced living. The procedures recommended are not only helpful to members of society for the purpose of public health, they are extremely useful to devotees on the enlightenment path who wish to maintain

wellness and refine the body so that soul awareness can freely express through it. Included in the category of medicine are the branches dealing with: general medicine; major surgery; ear, nose, eye, throat and mouth diseases; psychology; pediatrics; toxicology; rejuvenation; and vitalizing procedures.

Ayurveda is based on an understanding of the entire range of consciousness. It is thus concerned not only with assisting a person in the direction of total wellness and function, but also with ensuring his conscious cooperation with (and participation in) evolutionary processes which can result in his becoming a cosmic conscious being. The emphasis is *samhita*, true wholeness or completeness.

Translations of Ayurvedic texts have been published in several languages through the centuries. Two of the better known texts are *Charaka Samhita* and *Sushruta Samhita*, the former dealing with general routines and the latter with surgical procedures. It is believed that Ayurvedic knowledge flowed from India along trade routes to Arabia, Greece, Egypt, and later to Europe. It is also known to have been taken to Tibet and from there through all of Asia. It is a matter of historical record that Hippocrates, the Greek physician who lived in the fourth century B.C. and who is referred to as "the father of Western medicine" visited India, as did Greek philosophers of his era.

In India, general knowledge and practice of Ayurveda declined during the Dark Age, due to neglect as well as to the lack of interest of various invading cultures. Yet, even during the centuries of British rule, when Western medicine was emphasized in the larger cities and communities, Ayurveda remained the wellness regimen used by the majority of village people and by informed educated persons. Knowledge and practice of this science is again emerging on the world scene, with Ayurvedic colleges now established in India and Europe and clinics opened in Russia, Canada, and the United States.

A verse from *Charaka Samhita* explains, "All suffering which affects the mind or body has ignorance for its cause, and all happiness has its basis in clear scientific knowledge." From *Sushruta Samhita*: "This science of life is everlasting and bestows merit, prestige, happiness, longevity, livelihood, and heaven." Ayurveda is prevention-oriented, easily applied in most instances, free from harmful side-effects, economical, and aims at treating underlying causes of discomfort and disease rather than merely attempting to suppress

symptoms. An often quoted statement by Ayurvedic physicians is, "In this approach the physician is more interested in knowing what kind of patient has the disease, than he is in knowing what kind of disease the patient has." The approach is to first understand the basic psycho-physiological constitution of the patient-client and from that knowledge be able to prescribe what regimen is needed to have balance restored to mind and body.

To be successful in approach and application one must have an understanding of the fundamental nature of the universe, its principles and its laws. Health, it is taught, is the natural condition of a person who is living in harmony with cosmic forces. When this ideal condition prevails, all internal systems remain in balance. Disease, it then follows, is the result of being in disharmony with Nature's forces and in suffering consequent disequilibrium of internal forces and processes within mind and body.

Because Nature's principles are universal, all living things can be examined and their conditions understood by a knowledgeable person who is versed in this science of life. Four major complimentary approaches are made to assist a person in the direction of wellness:

1. *The Cultivation of Spiritual Growth* – For maximum benefits one should understand the importance of attending to all duties in life with a constructive, understanding attitude. One should also understand the importance of spiritual practices, including the practice of meditation for the purpose of unfolding ever-higher levels of soul awareness leading to cosmic consciousness and God consciousness. Just as the Godhead, through cosmic mind, is superior to universal processes, so the soul, through mind, is superior to the processes of the body it inhabits. Therefore, when one experiences superconsciousness there is a natural and easy flow of superior forces through mind and body. One then spontaneously thinks, feels and behaves in accord with the order of the universe, with the way of righteousness. As a result, stress is reduced and internal processes can function in perfect harmony and balance. Radiant health will be experienced and no discomfort or disease will manifest because no underlying causes are present.

2. *The Removal of Personal and Environmental Stress* – By cultivating entirely constructive attitudes, such as optimism, faith, hope, love, and cheerfulness, the body's immune system is strength-

ened. By meditating daily, stress accumulation is avoided. By choosing supportive environments and associates, possible sources of external stress-causing influences are kept at a minimum. (See Lifestyle section of the previous issue of this Study Guide series for more details about stress management.)

3. *Behavior Modification* – Guidelines are given for diet, personal hygiene, exercise, and other life-enhancing regimens, as well as for daily and seasonal routines which help to restore inner balance and contribute to harmonizing biological rhythms. Through behavior modification and nutrition one can adapt to cosmic forces and resist environmental challenges which occur from time to time.

4. *Specific Regimens* – These can include cleansing procedures, dietary recommendations, massage, and whatever else may be necessary to restore the patient-client to spiritual, psychological, and physical wellness. Herbal substances may be administered, as well as more intensive rejuvenation procedures.

The Ayurvedic physician carefully and fully examines the patient-client in order to arrive at an understanding of the basic psychophysiological constitution. Included in the examination is thorough questioning (and observation of behavior). Physical examination includes careful examination of the pulse. No reported or observed symptom is considered unimportant. Vague complaints, attitudes, feelings and firm beliefs are considered to be essential to the physician's knowledge of the patient-client if a correct diagnosis is to be made. Mild neurotic tendencies are looked for, as they could possibly be evidence of inner imbalance which could, sooner or later, contribute to subtle impulses which might disturb body chemistry and interfere with internal balance.

When I first met Paramahansaji he inquired about my health. Earlier that same year I had been seriously ill with rheumatic fever but had fully recovered, and told him so. He said, "Let's see," and took my pulse at the right wrist. After a moment he said, "Yes, you are all right now."

The Governing Cosmic Principles Regulating Mind-Body Processes

In the Ayurvedic approach to wellness, knowledge of primal *governing principles* is essential to diagnosing psychological and

physical problems as well as to recommending therapeutic procedures. The three major governing principles are considered to be Water influence, Fire influence, and Air influence. These are referred to, respectively, as *Kapha*, *Pitta*, and *Vata*. The governing principles are not the actual elements as manifested in the physical realm; they are the *influences* of the material causes of them. *Water governing influence* is a combination of Water and Earth influences, with Water influence predominant. *Fire governing influence* is a combination of Fire and Water influences, with Fire influence predominant. *Air governing influence* is a combination of Air and Ether influences, with Air predominant. Too, all of the element influences are present in some degree in each governing element influence, with the named influence being the major one. Remember that the element influences are manifestations of the influences of the three primary cosmic forces (sattwa, rajas, tamas), the electric attributes in the Godhead and throughout the field of Nature. Because of this, the foods we eat and anything else in Nature can be prescribed as a therapeutic agent if the specific influential qualities are known and if administered correctly.

We are born with a basic psycho-somatic (mind-body) constitution resulting from governing element influences contributed by our parents, modified by environmental circumstances. This is why we are, as individuals, unique. The ideal would be to have all three governing principles in perfect balance, but this is almost never so. However, we can contribute to this ideal condition by meditating, cultivating constructive mental attitudes and emotional states, remaining calm, adjusting personal behavior, attending to dietary regimens, and by whatever other procedure is useful to our purposes. We need not feel restricted because of not having been born with a perfectly balanced constitution.

When one or more governing principles are disturbed, or increased in influence to a degree that major disharmony and imbalance occurs, one may be inclined to experience changes in mood, behavior and physical function. When one or more governing principles are weakened, disharmony will also tend to result. It is within the range of available therapeutic strategies to bring about harmony between the three governing principles which operate in mind and body.

The following descriptions will be of help in understanding the

influences of the triple governing element principles:

1. *Water Element Influences* – Body stability, energy, lubrication, unctuousness (oily/greasy). Psychological effects are attachment, tendency to accumulate, and willingness to forgive others. This governing principle is aggravated by lack of physical exercise, sedentary habits, eating too much sweet, acid, salty and oily foods, or too much milk, sugar, fat, and sweet fruits. Heaviness, drowsiness, itching of skin, and constipation can also result.

2. *Fire Element Influences* – Body heat, internal body temperature, digestion, power of perception (eyesight). The psychological effects are understanding, intelligence, anger, hate, and jealousy. This governing principle is aggravated by fear, anger, grief, too much frantic physical exercise, incomplete digestion of foods, and eating too many foods which are bitter, acid, salty, and dry. Hyperacidity, fainting, perspiration, excessive thirst, paleness of skin, and delirium can result.

3. *Air Element Influences* – Movement, breathing, natural urges to eliminate waste products, tissue transformation, and sensory functions. This governing principle is aggravated by excesses of any kind, grief, anxiety, fear, strain or stress of any kind, suppression of natural urges, and hard falls or serious accidents of any kind. Stiffness, rough skin, shivering, hoarseness of voice, yawning, dryness, thirst, and sad moods can result. A sense of fear, emptiness and general anxiety may be characteristic of one in whom the Air governing principle is aggravated.

Since the governing principles pervade all of Nature, including our minds and bodies, when they are in balance, perfect health and function are the normal results. When they are not in harmony, disorder tends to result. Air governing principle influences the movements of prana (life force) in the body and disturbance of this principle can upset the equilibrium of prana flows. The practice of pranayama (breathing exercises to regulate prana) can assist in maintaining Air governing principle balance.

Psychological states can also change the balance of the governing principles in the body. Strong emotions, positive or negative, can contribute to either health or disease and premature death. Firm beliefs and emotional states can contribute to changes in body

chemistry. The intentional cultivation of optimism, faith and happiness strengthens the body's immune system and contributes to health. Habits of pessimism, fear, grief, depression and feeling alienated from life can weaken the immune system and impair body function.

When symptoms are recognizable they are but evidence of deeper causes which have been present at subtle levels for a much longer period of time. The purpose of Ayurvedic therapies is not only to eliminate symptoms, but to also remove the underlying subtle causes so that problems will not again arise. When a person is self-responsible for his or her own wellness a lifestyle will be able to be maintained which will encourage permanent wellness. The Ayurvedic physician provides instruction and emotional support, but the patient-client is responsible for final results.

Except for harmful influences which are introduced into the body, diseases arise from within as a result of internal disturbance. The body's immune system is quite capable of resisting the intrusion of viruses and other potentially threatening agents when one is healthy and the governing principles are balanced. One of the key purposes of Ayurvedic regimens is to encourage the internal "fires" which are capable of metabolizing foods and transforming them into needed substances.

When internal fire is weak the processes of digestion, metabolism and nutrient transformation are impaired. Toxins accumulate which clog the systems and interfere with function, weakening various body systems. Purification regimens may be prescribed for the purpose of removing waste buildup so that health can be restored. Daily elimination of normal waste products is routinely encouraged. The three major waste products are feces, urine and perspiration—the end results of the food transformation cycle.

Feces supply nutrients through intestinal tissues before being eliminated, as well as maintain intestinal strength and tone. The urinary system removes salt, water and urea (nitrogenous waste) from the body. Urine is produced in the large intestine and helps to maintain a balance of water electrolytes (electrical conductors) within body fluids. Normal urine production is essential to maintaining normal blood pressure and volume. If urine is scanty it may be because water is being retained in the tissues of the body. Perspiration helps maintain body temperature, carries off wastes, keeps skin

pores healthy and is beneficial to the skin by promoting smoothness and elasticity. Perspiration massaged into the skin and allowed to dry before being washed off, cleanses and softens the skin.

The Seven Bodily Tissues

Seven tissues, the results of food transformation, comprise the "constructing substances" of the body. They maintain the functions of different organs, systems and vital parts. They also provide protective mechanisms for the body. They are the result of inner fire, the transforming influence, fulfilling its purposes. They are:

1. *Plasma* – Contains nutrients and transports them throughout the body to build and maintain organs and systems. In women, plasma also manifests as breast milk and menstrual fluid.
2. *Blood* – Carries nutrients and oxygen (and prana from oxygen) and transports carbon dioxide from inner parts of the body to the lungs, to be exhaled.
3. *Muscle* – Covers some organs and provides joint movements.
4. *Fat* – Maintains lubrication and provides insulation against environmental coldness.
5. *Bone* – Supports body structure.
6. *Marrow* – Soft, fat, vascular tissue inside of bones. Nerve tissue is of similar tissue characteristic and carries motor and sensory impulses.
7. *Reproductive Tissue* – The end result of nutrient transformation, making possible reproduction of the species.

If any of these supporting tissues are deficient, the ones following in sequence will suffer. For radiant health, it is important that the transformative fires be strong and that all governing principles be balanced. The end result after the seven successive stages have been completed is the manifestation of life essence (*ojas*). This fine essence imparts radiance to the body, brilliance to the mind, and magnetism to the personality. One's inner light then radiates for all to see. It is also accumulated in the body as a result of meditation, calmness, purity of thought and purpose, and devotion to God. It is dissipated (wasted, dispersed) by excessive talk, restlessness, stress, and poor health habits of all kinds.

What occurs in the cosmos occurs also in the body of man. The

universe is within us as well as around us. There is no real surface separating our body or mind from the cosmos. Our bodies are formed of the substances found in the larger field of Nature and the same governing principles are influential in everything. This is why internal balance is only possible when we are in harmony with inner processes and outer forces. The ideal of Ayurveda is to offer man the opportunity to unfold inborn capacities and experience unity with all life. It is, then, more than a system of wellness; it embraces all that can allow the soul to experience spiritual freedom.

Devotees in the Shrine of All Faiths Meditation Temple at Center for Spiritual Awareness headquarters.

Let the practitioner of yoga constantly concentrate his mind on the Supreme Reality, remaining in solitude and alone, self-controlled, free from desires and longings for things or sense experience. Having his body positioned in a firm posture, let him make his mind one-pointed; controlling thoughts and senses, let him practice pure contemplation for the attainment of inward purity. Holding the body, head and neck erect and still, flowing attention to the spiritual eye without allowing his eyes to wander, serene and fearless, firm in his vow of self-control, subdued in mind, let him sit, harmonized, his attention flowing to the Transcendental Field which is the single Reality. The devoted person of controlled mind, ever remaining harmonized, attains to peace, the supreme realization.

BHAGAVAD GITA 6: 10-15

Meditation and Superconsciousness

The higher purpose of meditation practice is to experience superconscious states, cosmic consciousness, God consciousness, and transcendence.

Superconsciousness is other than unconscious, subconscious, and ordinary waking states. During deep sleep, unconsciousness mental processes are dormant but one is not aware. During dreams, subconscious activity occurs. In the ordinary waking state mental transformations persist coincidental with unconscious and subconscious influences. During ordinary waking states we are not always fully aware and drives and tendencies rooted in the unconscious influence our thought processes and emotional states. Meditation, properly practiced, enables one to calm emotions and still mental processes so that conscious, clear awareness prevails. This alert condition, during which feelings and thoughts do not disturb awareness, is lower superconsciousness; lower, because while allowing alert thought-free awareness, higher perceptions may not yet be experienced. It is, however, a state from which higher orders of reality can be contemplated and their aspects and attributes discovered and known.

The soul is a specialized unit of pure consciousness. Hence, the statement found in the *Yoga Sutras* (1: 3): "Established in being (pure consciousness), the soul remains steady in its own nature." We

can experience our beingness during superconscious meditation and at other times when we are still. So long as we are established in being, we are soul-satisfied and at peace. However, when attention flows outward, there is a tendency for soul awareness to be removed from the centered state, as explained in the *Yoga Sutras* (1: 4): "When not established in being, the soul is inclined to identify with the mental field and its changes and modifications." The "changes" are the almost constant thought transformations. The "modifications" are (*Yoga Sutras* 1: 5), "...perceptions based on valid knowledge (our conclusions about what we see or experience), misinterpretation (of what is seen or experienced, illusion), hallucination, sleep, and memory.

Conceptual conclusions based on observation enable us to relate to our world but are still in the realm of mind. Misperception causes us to make errors in judgment, hence, we are restricted by our illusions. We think we know when we do not really know. Hallucination has no external object, being entirely a creation of the mind. Ordinary subconscious and unconscious sleep, while a refreshing interlude for mind and body, is usually experienced with little awareness. It is possible, by cultivating superconscious perceptions, to eventually sleep superconsciously so that sleep becomes an opportunity for conscious spiritual growth. Memories are stored mental records of past perceptions. They have value in enabling us to relate the past with the present and probable future, but when they are not selective, when they intrude into awareness and cause conflict, such identification with them can cause problems.

As spiritual beings we are not the body, we are not the mind, and we are not the modifications of the mind. We only relate to the body and the mind for the purpose of functioning in the material spheres. So it is well to function through body and mind but not overly identify with either. A person who is strongly identified with the body will find it almost impossible to experience being other than a body in spite of affirmations to the contrary. And when awareness is attached to mental processes it is difficult to remove awareness from that attachment by an exercise of will. But when we meditate correctly, attention is naturally and easily withdrawn from body and mind identification, and superconscious awareness is experienced. Meditation, experienced spontaneously or practiced with proven techniques, affords us an opportunity to actually experience our soul

nature as pure being. One can accomplish in just a few months, or years, of meditation what cannot usually be accomplished in lifetimes of unscientific efforts to willfully transcend physical and mental relationships.

Lower and Higher Superconscious States and Meditative Perceptions

Superconsciousness is the result of mastery and quieting of the modifications usually occurring in the mental field. In the *Yoga Sutras* (2:1) this is referred to as the attainment of Yoga or, *samadhi* ("the bringing together of the meditator's awareness with the object of meditation"). Samadhi, superconsciousness, is not unconsciousness or hypnotic trance. To an observer, a meditator rapt in superconscious contemplation may appear to be unconscious but, in reality, the inner state is one of supreme wakefulness.

In preliminary superconscious states the meditator may experience a degree of beingness and deep calm, yet still be aware of mood swings and thought processes. He may observe these processes with mild detachment, yet wonder, "Am I, or am I not, really experiencing a superconscious state?" In yogic literature this state is referred to as "samadhi with doubt." It is superconsciousness but not yet complete internalization or transcendence. One should persist in repeated superconscious episodes until feelings and thought processes are completely quieted.

Then, with deeper internalization of attention, advanced levels of lower superconsciousness can be experienced. Lower superconscious states always have an object of contemplation. It may be one's concept of Deity, light, sound, blissful awareness, the contemplation of boundless space, or whatever one is inclined to focus upon. One yogic saying is, "As a crystal reflects that which is near it, so the mind cleansed of thought activity reflects divine qualities." This reflection in the mental field of the object of contemplation is lower superconsciousness, or preliminary samadhi. It is a valid spiritual experience and can prepare the way to higher perceptions. Being superconsciousness with an object, it is referred to as "samadhi with support." Superconsciousness without an object is referred to as "samadhi without support." The former is the result of identification with the object contemplated, the latter is unfettered and results in spontaneous higher realizations.

During episodes of lower superconsciousness the meditator may have visions, which are evidence of subtle mental transformations influencing awareness. One may experience the sensation of merging in light or expanding consciousness in the cosmic sound, OM. One may awaken to astral perceptions and see into subtle spheres, although not all seeming astral perceptions are valid—they may be superconsciously induced dream interludes. Any perception of inner spheres is possible during lower superconscious states. One may even awaken to awareness of causal spheres, the realm of magnetic influences, and perceive the inner workings of Nature at fine levels. Compared to ordinary self-conscious states, the ones common to most people, such inner perceptions are gloriously revealing but they do not represent the ultimate of what is possible for a God-surrendered devotee.

I was once walking with Paramahansaji, at his California retreat, and he invited my questions. I asked, "How many of the masters mentioned in *Autobiography of a Yogi* are liberated?" He said, "Not many. Many saints are so content to experience the bliss of God that they do not aspire to realizations beyond that." To be liberated is to have no unwanted identification with any aspect of manifest creation. A liberated soul, if embodied, functions easily through body and mind but is inwardly anchored in the Infinite.

Just as the ideal, while relating to "this world" circumstances, is to function with understanding but without attachment, so when meditating the ideal is to explore all possibilities but not be attached to any perceptions or experiences. Some meditators make the mistake of meditating to the point of feeling calm or blissful and then remain in that state for the duration of the meditation session. This is useful for relaxation and for therapeutic effects, but it is not useful for the purpose of steady spiritual growth. Whatever is perceived or experienced during meditation can be observed, but it should not be possessed. It should be released in order for higher perceptions to unfold. No matter what is experienced when meditating, gently continue to inquire (not with words, but with soul urgency), "What is beyond that?" In this way you will remain alert and meditation will be a progressive, illuminating experience.

Renounce any temptation to contact souls on the inner planes for the purpose of casual interaction. Avoid any temptation to contact a presumed inner "guide." Your own innate intelligence, God's wisdom

in you, will be your guide. It is possible to experience an attunement with your guru, if you have one, when meditating. Any "voices" you might seem to hear talking to you, have origins in your own subconscious so do not be self-deceived by them. Rise above subconscious influences and contemplate God and the field of pure consciousness.

Verify your superconscious perceptions, if you want to, by reading the scriptures and talking with your guru or spiritual mentor. Do not discuss your inner perceptions with friends or others whom you meet who are also on the spiritual path. For advice, always seek out the most informed and most reliable person you know. The superconscious meditation way is the inner way to God-realization and is not known by persons who are not themselves advanced in meditation practice.

Advanced Mantra
Meditation Practice

If you have been using the basic meditation procedure explained in the first lesson you should be experiencing reasonable progress. The word *mantra* (*manas* "mind," and *tra* "to take beyond") protects the mind from subconscious influences and environmental disturbances. When Parmahansaji taught meditation classes he always taught mantra meditation as the first procedure because it is easy to learn and use. In the Kriya tradition as taught by my guru line the first mantra given is *hong-sau* (pronounced "hong-saw"). This mantra has the vibratory effect of calming the mental field and relaxing the body.

It is "listened to" with inhalation and exhalation—"Hong" with inhalation and "sau" with exhalation, breathing as described in the first Lesson while looking into the spiritual eye and contemplating the Infinite. Mantra meditation can continue for as long as necessary to result in mental calm, until the mantra is no longer needed. Paramahansaji taught that superconsciousness could be experienced by mantra meditation alone. There are advanced techniques, and these will be taught as we proceed. But some students unwisely assume that mantra meditation, because it is taught to beginning meditators, is not worthy of their full attention and practice. By sitting for a long duration, practicing mantra meditation, the body is relaxed and the blood is cleansed so that breathing becomes very refined. When breathing becomes refined, mental processes likewise

become refined and concentration becomes easy and natural.

Lahiri Mahasaya often said, "Mind is nothing more than restless breath." What he meant was, "Mental processes are driven by the body's life forces which, in turn, are agitated by disturbed breathing." Breathing is irregular and forceful when emotions are dominant. When emotionally upset, breathing is more forceful. When concentrating, breathing is refined and subtle. By purposely calming the breath, mental calm is induced and concentration becomes easier. Knowing the relationship between breathing patterns and states of consciousness, yogis evolved breathing techniques (pranayamas) for the purpose of consciously regulating emotions and mental processes in order to master states of consciousness. It is, of course, possible to adjust states of consciousness by intention, but until this is learned it is easier to acquire the knack of doing so by using meditation techniques. A spiritual master is a person who has mastered his or her states of consciousness.

After successfully learning to adjust states of consciousness during meditation, learn to do so at other times whenever you desire. You will become proficient with practice.

During my first two years of discipleship I was instructed to meditate at least twice a day. I meditated early in the morning and again in the evening. When possible, I also practiced hong-sau mantra for thirty minutes at noon. I found that regular meditation practice, even when it was not always fruitful, kept me centered and constantly aware of my spiritual resolve. I could enjoy activities and interactions and not be overly caught up in outer circumstances.

Some devotees come into this world highly conscious and with strong resolve to experience illumination of consciousness. They require only a little instruction and occasional motivation to attain their goal. Some come into the world with similar qualifications but miss the mark in life, or begin their quest and then give up or become distracted. For most devotees progress will be slower but it can be progressive if resolve is present and one is disciplined in study and practice. The great essential is to never turn back once the spiritual path is affirmed as the major course in life.

Superficial involvement with one path, or many, will not result in desired spiritual growth. To start with high resolve and then quickly grow weary, is not useful. To bring our psychological baggage and egocentric behaviors to the spiritual path is immature. What is

needed is clear vision, strong resolve, disciplined practice, patience, and faith in God. This approach will carry the devotee over the seas of confusion and challenge to the shore of God-realization. Let your heartfelt affirmation be, "No matter what is encountered on the enlightenment path, no matter what it requires of me, I will never turn back!" You know, if not from personal experience then by nonjudgmental observation of the lives of others, that the human condition (the self-conscious state) is not the way of soul happiness and God-discovery. And in your heart, your soul nature, you know what is in store for you as you proceed in confidence and in faith. What you have gone through, or may be going through, and more, has been experienced by the saints. They have awakened from the dream of mortality and have declared the reality of the high vision you nurture in your heart. Therefore, practice, and be steady on the path.

No matter what you behold, try to be conscious of that "other," greater reality behind what you are beholding.

No matter with whom you are speaking, imagine that "other" One, communicating with you through that person's words and gestures.

Whatever work you are doing, feel that "other" Presence nearby, watching you, guiding you, giving you strength.

When looking into people's eyes, see God there, touching you through their consciousness.

With every event in your life, watch it as it unfolds. Ask yourself, "What is God trying to teach me through this experience?"

PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA

Personal Comprehension Review

Use this review opportunity to improve your understanding of the Lesson material and facilitate your practice.

1. Why is it important to examine the process of cosmic manifestation?

2. According to this philosophical view, what is God?

3. How can we know that the reality of God is always present?

4. What is a yantra?

5. Why does healthy, long life have value to us?

6. What is the meaning of the word *Ayurveda*?

7. What are the actions of the three primary cosmic attributes?

8. What are the three cosmic governing principle influences?

9. What is a soul?

10. What is the difference between lower and higher superconscious states?

11. Be sure to practice mantra meditation as instructed.

For supplemental reading, refer to the sections of the *Yoga Sutras* (in *Life Surrendered in God*) noted in the Lesson material.

Always be Anchored in the Infinite

What should we do when the winds of change occur in our lives? We can react in a variety of ways. We can panic, we can be anxious, we can become angry, we can feel helpless...or we can withdraw for an interlude of reflective prayer and meditation and there, in the deep silence of the soul be anchored in That which is ever unmoved by surface happenings.

Then centered in soul peace and God awareness we can again turn our attention to outer circumstances and more effectivly relate to them. Greater is That which is within us than anything that is outside of us.

There is a positive aspect of change—it enables us to grow,to become more conscious and to learn to view the world as God sees it, as God *is* it.

The way to remain stable in a changing world is to be identified with inner changelessness, while viewing the passing scene with understanding.

– Roy Eugene Davis

CENTER FOR SPIRITUAL AWARENESS
STUDIES IN TRUTH LESSON GUIDE
MASTER COURSE NUMBER THREE

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The Soul's Journey in Spacetime

UNDERSTANDING REINCARNATION, DUTY & DESTINY

Life is one universal soul, which by virtue of the enliven-ing Breath, and the informing Word, all organized bodies have in common, each after its kind.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE (1772-1834)
Aids to Reflection

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Studies in Truth Lesson Guides are published and distributed by Center for Spiritual Awareness for private use and guided study supervised by acknowledged CSA ministers, teachers and group leaders. Prepared and written by Roy Eugene Davis as an examination of the enlightenment process, with emphasis on the traditions, philosophy and practice of Kriya Yoga. Center for Spiritual Awareness, Post Office Box 7, Lake Rabun Road, Lakemont, Georgia 30552 (U.S.A.) In West Africa: Center for Spiritual Awareness, Post Office Box 507, Accra, Ghana.

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH (1770-1850)

To fulfill one's duties in life may not be easy, and may not always be immediately enjoyable. Attaining divine joy is a long-term proposition. Man must discharge his duties in life, and not avoid them, if he would attain freedom in eternity.

PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA

The Soul's Journey in Spacetime
UNDERSTANDING REINCARNATION, DUTY & DESTINY

Our origins are in deep inner space and to deep inner space we will return when our relationship with phenomenal spheres is over. Until transcendence, we are duty-bound to play our destined roles in life and to continue on the awakening path.

We do not have a soul, we *are* a soul, a perfect being, a unit of pure consciousness literally "made in the image and likeness of God." God is the Oversoul, consciousness with attributes out of which the manifest universe unfolded. We are specialized units of consciousness with attributes and are here to be involved with life processes. God's attributes are the cosmic forces, intelligence and creative energy. Our attributes are the cosmic forces, intelligence and creative energy. God has the responsibility of maintaining creation—our responsibility is to participate in God's evolutionary processes.

As the reflected light of God shining on primal matter expresses as cosmic individuality, the reflected light of God shining in the intellectual faculty of individualized mind expresses as a soul. Our involvement with matter is a matter of identification, rather than becoming something other than what we are. In other words, we do not become human beings, we only identify with the human condition. But in most instances the identification is so impacting that souls temporarily lose awareness of their real nature and assume the human identity, much like an actor who is intent upon playing a role,

becoming so involved with the character he is playing that he loses his usual personality identity. The result is that we may wonder if we have a soul and what its future will be as a result of our behavior. Often, so complete is the involvement with matter that the soul feels separated from God; hence the desire to know God and to experience union with God.

Feeling separated from God we may try to avoid Him if our behavior is not constructive. We may be afraid of God. We may wonder why God allows human suffering and the myriad examples of seeming misfortune we observe in our world. We may attempt to please God to earn His favor. We may engage in study and spiritual practices, hoping to learn about God and perhaps experience a relationship with Him. We may be confused by various conflicting theories, opinions and philosophical explanations propounded by professed knowers of God and His ways.

While it is helpful to have the wise counsel of truly enlightened teachers to provide us with knowledge of God and ways to realize our divine nature, our own inner awareness of being is the most convincing proof of our reality as an immortal soul. For many who have this inner awareness of being, the challenging obstacle is that of detaching attention from mental conditionings and beliefs acquired over years of less than conscious experience in this and other realms. We may say that we know ourselves to be made in the image and likeness of God but be unable to fully experience our real nature, or to actualize our innate capacities. We may say, "I know who and what I am but I cannot express who and what I am." We then experience the difference between partial understanding and actual realization. With partial understanding we may have a sense of our divinity, along with a degree of comprehension, but with actual realization all of the confusion is eliminated and soul knowledge and ability spontaneously expresses.

Identification with Matter and Cycles of Reincarnation

A *cycle* is a recurring series of events, usually a returning to prior conditions. Reincarnation is the process of experiencing such cycles, but the experiences of souls may differ in relationship to the universe. The journey in spacetime is not the same for all souls. Some souls become involved with material realms at the level of primal

matter and remain so involved until awakening from that level of identification. Others become involved at the level of causal manifestation only. Still others become involved at the astral level only. Many become involved at the physical level and then gradually awaken through astral, causal and primal matter levels to God-realization. A few souls come into physical embodiment directly from celestial realms and may not have strong ties with the realm of matter. They may function as lightbearers, world saviors or avatars. *Avatara* means "the descent of divine nature and power into matter" in specific instances. From a broader perspective, it is understood that God expressing as souls provides the possibility of collective divine consciousness coming into more obvious expression. This is the concept of the "universal avatar," the divine nature of every soul having the potential to express and by so doing, have redemptive influence in the world. While we are wise to acknowledge the degrees of higher awareness expressed by other souls, it is well for us not to err in believing that divine capacities are absent in us. Too often, devotees tend to view God's operant power outside of themselves, embodied in another but not innate to themselves. The result may then be that we look up to the gods but do not feel ourselves capable of manifesting our Godly qualities.

When the reflected light of God identifies with subtle matter and mind, the soul becomes somewhat unconscious. This is the initial delusion, the darkening of consciousness. It is this condition from which the soul needs to be awakened. We say the soul is "born of matter" when identified with material substance and "born of spirit" when awakened from this identification. The direct teaching of enlightenment traditions is to wake up, to look in the right direction for release and soul freedom. Sometimes only a reminder is needed. At other times one may need to persistingly inquire into the question: "How was it like for me before I forgot my divine nature?" The way of knowledge is the way of examining the true nature of the soul and the true nature of God, first by intellectual inquiry, then by intuitive perception. Intellectual inquiry can only take us so far because the intellect is of the mind and the mind is a material medium. When intellect has taken us to the very edge of discovery, intuition provides final insight.

The deluded soul, confused and subject to making further errors in perception, tends to become increasingly involved with externals.

One reason for this is that in searching for meaning the deluded soul looks to its surroundings. Another reason is that the cosmic force of inertia carries soul awareness into involvement with matter. The result in either instance is that desires, acquired memories of clouded perceptions, and the accumulation of trauma associated with painful experiences further condition the mind. These conditionings and memories are referred to as the karmic condition. The soul, being a reflected ray of God's light, has no karma, so do not claim any karma for yourself. Karma is only in relationship to your mind. Because enlightenment, total comprehension of the truth about consciousness, does not always occur instantaneously, spiritual practices are prescribed to assist a devotee to cleanse the mental field of restricting conditionings. This is the basis of yoga and all worthwhile enlightenment procedures. In the *Yoga Sutras* (2: 2) we read: "Kriya Yoga is practiced to weaken and eliminate all physical and mental obstacles, for the purpose of realizing God."

The initial focus of effort by a yogi is to weaken the influences of pain-causing mental conditionings, then to remove them. Along the way, even pleasure-causing mental conditionings are weakened and removed so that no mental causes remain to influence the devotee's consciousness. The ideal is not only to rise above the influence of mental conditionings but also to be removed from the influences of the cosmic forces in Nature. The soul then functions spontaneously under inner guidance and is supremely free even while embodied.

The simple law of mind and consciousness is that we tend to experience life according to our mental states and our states of consciousness. Therefore, the soul involved with a conditioned mind and with restricted states of consciousness will tend to experience life according to inner causes. *Karma* refers to the law of causation. One may affirm, "I have no karma," but as long as one is reacting to mental causes and functioning from less than an enlightened state of consciousness, much of what is done and experienced will be the effect of inner causes.

According to our mental states, our states of consciousness, our memories, and how we have learned to relate to the world, our personality is created. The personality (*persona*, "mask") is a convenience to us in relating to our environment but if it is rigid, it is the false person and our real essence cannot express through it. If we are identified with mental conditionings and personality we will

tend to perpetuate circumstances as they are, perhaps changing very little during the course of one incarnation, or many. We then tend to play almost identical roles year after year and incarnation after incarnation, until we experience a definite shift of consciousness and begin to view ourselves and our world differently. Until we are spiritually awake we tend to function according to our assumption of who and what we are.

There is value in being able to adjust states of consciousness, in being able to acquire improved understanding about how the mind functions, and to somewhat transform our personality in order to be more effective in accomplishing our purposes. But while doing these things we may still be functioning at a human conscious level, improving the human condition but not contributing to spiritual growth. There are many well-intentioned people who have for years been involved with various personal growth processes and who are reasonably skillful in making changes to help themselves accomplish purposes, but who are still not on a spiritual growth path. Some may even unfold unusual soul abilities and acquire inner knowledge of how the universe functions. In past ages some such persons were referred to as gods because their abilities seemed far beyond those of the average man. Yet, to aspire to the status of a god is not the goal of one on the enlightenment path. Even highly intelligent and functional people, if not God-realized, are still involved with phenomenal manifestation and not yet conscious of their real potential.

Extremely unconscious souls may move from Earth realms to astral spheres, and back to Earth, hundreds or thousands of times before experiencing a marked degree of spiritual awakening. Other souls may reincarnate only a few times, then move on to astral spheres to continue their unfoldment. These may reincarnate from causal to astral spheres until being able to remain in causal spheres until final spiritual growth occurs. Some high astral spheres are "heaven-like" and are very attractive to souls weary of gross material experience.

Usually, after a duration in astral spheres, a soul born into Earth realms is refreshed and ready to begin a new adventure. It would be ideal if children could be taught about the real nature of consciousness and the purpose of life at an early age. It would save many of them from the frustration and pain which too often accompanies the growing years, and the adult years which follow.

It is not useful to be preoccupied with reincarnation to the point of attempting to recall past embodiments. Our comments often reveal our ignorance. We may say, "I wonder who I was the last time I was here?" Of course, what we mean, if we have even a little understanding is, "I wonder what role I played before?" You are always who and what you are as a soul. You were never anyone else and will never be anyone else. And in our misunderstanding we may draw other wrong conclusions. We may think that souls must repeatedly reincarnate in order to be punished for past mistakes, to experience all possible life situations in order to grow in understanding, or to alternately manifest male and female roles to balance their soul nature.

If we suffer because of errors in perception or judgment, it is only because we do not know any better. All possible life situations do not have to be experienced in order for us to grow in understanding, because whatever is comprehended about the manifest realms has nothing to do with enlightenment. Understanding may enable us to function more efficiently in the realm comprehended but relative understanding does not contribute to absolute realization of God. And the soul nature cannot possibly be balanced as a result of the gender roles we manifest. When functioning from soul awareness we are inclined to express a balance of reason and intuition regardless of whether our role is that of male or female. It is a common tendency of people involved with personality and mental conditionings to generate theories about life processes which satisfy their own emotional needs.

Memories of previous incarnations and astral sojourns are stored in memory. If they surface and have value in enabling us to accomplish our purposes, it is all right. But to be preoccupied with such memories is to look in the wrong direction for understanding. We want to awaken to knowledge of God, not remain involved with memories and conditioned behavior.

During one of my early evening talks with Paramahansaji, in 1950, he told me, "You have come this time, as have a few others, to help me with this work. You almost died last year when you were ill, but your love for God pulled you through. You died young last time, too. You only have one or two things to work out this time. You have good karma. You have a new life now and you should make the most of it."

In a few simple statements my guru confirmed my own understanding. As a child of four or five years of age I was aware of an inner reality. I could know of events before they transpired and was aware of thoughts, moods and behaviors of other people even when not in physical proximity to them. As I grew up the awareness of my inner reality persisted and a sense of cosmic awareness became more pronounced. I "knew" God but could not at the time explain my knowing, even to myself. When I was seventeen I read *Lives of a Bengal Lancer* by the English author, Francis Yeats-Brown, and learned of yoga. I was intrigued! A year later I read Paul Brunton's book, *A Search in Secret India* and, later, Paramahansa Yogananda's *Autobiography of a Yogi*. Yoga was not new to my mind. As I read, and learned to practice some of the procedures, it was as though I was being reminded of things already known. As a teenager I had mental visions of one day traveling the world to speak of God. All that has unfolded since has been as though scripted, as a matter of destiny being fulfilled.

In outer appearance and demeanor I am a somewhat conservative American man. Inside, I am a yogi fulfilling a mission and representing a teaching tradition with roots in the hidden past. What I know about myself and my role I could not possibly fully explain to another. Now and then I meet others who recognize and understand, because they are also on a destiny path which intersects with my own. In such circumstances words are not necessary. There is silent knowing and spontaneous cooperation.

It is not uncommon for us to move through spacetime with other souls who share a similar destiny. We sometimes refer to them as "our spiritual family" and the bond we have is stronger than with genetic family members. Some of our genetic family members may share a destiny with us and some may not. Sometimes human relationships are a matter of fate, a matter of circumstances resulting from decisions we have made for one reason or another. Fate refers to what is caused, destiny refers to what unfolds in harmony with our soul purpose. Fate can be challenging or supportive, depending upon circumstances. Destiny is always supportive of higher purposes. For a person who is egocentric and attempting to determine a personal course in life, the urging of destiny can appear as an unwelcome complication because it is not yet accepted.

Attending to Duties While Fulfilling Soul Destiny

We have a duty to ourselves to find our major purpose in life, to provide for our legitimate needs and the needs of those for whom we are responsible, to learn to live in cooperation with the universe, and to attend to our spiritual growth. All four duties should be cheerfully assumed and given our responsible attention. It is a mistake for one on the enlightenment path to neglect other duties, for by fulfilling them correctly we not only repay our debt to Nature, we learn to exercise our creative abilities and contribute to spiritual growth. Persons who feel themselves to be no longer necessary to the world, should withdraw from it and live in seclusion. Most people are not at this stage, however, and need to learn the lessons that performance of duty can provide.

All duties should be fulfilled with selfless actions, willing performance and in the spirit of service. Such actions then do not bind, nor do they contribute to future effects. Instead, they provide the means for working out karmic conditions and dissolving ego. No person can live in this or any other realm without performing action. The way to proceed is to do all things without attachment and without resistance, leaving the constructive results to God, to the betterment of the universe and to the benefit of souls. This is the way of karma yoga, the way of surrendered action. Living in this way, when the moment of transition from the body comes, we will then be able to depart without regret, having done our conscious best while here and ready to meet whatever destiny might present us on our continuing journey in spacetime to the ultimate conclusion of transcendence.

When we were born into this world we died to another. When we depart from this world we will be born in yet another. The way to avoid unwanted future births is to learn to live consciously while here. The way to avoid unwanted future transitions is to "die to the world" and live with spiritual understanding. Then all relative happenings, even births and seeming deaths will be seen for what they are: dream events occurring in cosmic mind, God's mind. From a higher perspective, most of what we do and experience is insignificant. Only duty, destiny and spiritual awakening are of value.

He who rightly observes the rules of health as explained here will not be deprived of 100 years of healthy life.
CHARAKA SAMHITA

All I have seen teaches me to trust the Creator for all I have not seen. Whatever it be which the great Providence prepares for us, it must be something large and generous, and in the great style of his works. The future must be up to the style of our faculties—of memory, of hope, of imagination, of reason.
RALPH WALDO EMERSON (1803-1882)

Lifestyle Guidelines

LIVING IN HARMONY WITH THE RHYTHMS OF NATURE

Every person is born with a basic psychosomatic constitution which remains generally the same throughout his life. The Greek word *psyche* means soul, but is often defined as spirit, soul, or mind, with mind being the commonly accepted definition. *Somatic* refers to the physical body.

Because of variables, no two people are identical so far as their psychosomatic constitution is concerned. In relationship to the three governing principles, a person may possess one of several possible constitutions depending upon the dominant influences and combinations of influences. One may be Water, Fire or Air: Water-Fire; Fire-Water; Fire-Air; Air-Fire; Water-Air; Air-Water; or Water-Fire-Air. These ten constitutional types vary because of the percentage of mixtures of governing principle influences.

Governing principle influences are determined at conception, due to the combined characteristics of the parents, their environmental circumstances, time and circumstances of intercourse, circumstances of the mother during gestation, the mother's spiritual and psychological state, and the food she eats. The soul also brings with it psychological characteristics from the subtle realms, which contribute to the final result. We can then see how intricate the process of determining individual constitutional types can be.

We cannot do anything about what we were provided with at birth, so far as our basic psychosomatic constitution is concerned, but we can do something about helping ourselves once we are informed.

Spiritual Awareness and the Influences of the Triple Cosmic Force Attributes

Since the aspects of cosmic force are influential in all of Nature, they act upon mind and body. The degree of spiritual awareness of the soul is also influential. Our constitutional nature is not static but is constantly being modified by internal and external forces.

Sattwa guna contributes to mind-body order and influences function in the direction of harmony. Rajas guna contributes to motion, transformation and change. Tamas guna contributes to inertia, non-change. The cultivation of sattwic qualities is, then, useful to higher purposes.

The body is an extension of the mind and what occurs in the mind influences body function. Conversely, what occurs in the body will have some influence on mental states and operations. It therefore follows that the cultivation of constructive mental states is useful in manifesting and maintaining physical wellness, and physical wellness can contribute to improved mental function.

Superior soul awareness virtually assures a healthy mental condition which, in turn, reflects as improved body function. A person who is spiritually aware is spontaneously inclined to think constructively and to willingly do those things which support physical health and environmental harmony.

The ability to comprehend what is examined, and the outlook or mental attitude we maintain, are definitely affected by the influences of the three primary cosmic forces. How the cosmic influences affect our mental states and states of consciousness is explained in the *Bhagavad Gita* (17: 1-13):

> The faith of people is threefold, according to their basic nature. Man's evolutionary status corresponds to his states of consciousness and mental states. Rightly resolved but partially deluded people worship the gods (celestial beings and saints), more deluded people worship the demigods (those partly spiritually aware and partly in human consciousness), and completely deluded people worship the spirits of friends and relatives. Extremely materialistic people with religious impulses perform self-punishing austerities, injure themselves and suppress the movements of divine impulses. By the foods we eat, and by our manner of giving, the level of understanding can be determined. Those who are on the upward way prefer foods which promote

> life, vitality, strength, health, joy and cheerfulness. Restless people prefer foods which are bitter, sour, overly seasoned and which are difficult to digest. Lower types prefer tasteless, stale and unclean foods. High-minded people give according to scriptural law (generously, with wisdom) without any expectation of reward. They give because they feel it to be their duty to make right use of their resources. Restless, selfish people give for the sake of expected reward and for personal recognition. The lower types give grudgingly, if at all, without faith, and they attempt to acquire things without making fair compensation.

These simple guidelines offer us the opportunity to see ourselves as we presently are and to decide to make useful changes if change for the better is necessary. Again, in the *Gita* (17: 14-19):

> Discipline of the body is said to include reverence for the spiritual teacher, pure intentions, cleanliness, control of vital forces, and harmlessness. Discipline of speech includes the effort to speak kindly and to be truthful. Discipline of the mind includes silence at appropriate times, self-control and high resolve. These are to be observed without any expectation of reward. Whatever we do for the purpose of acquiring name or fame is a waste of effort and is not of lasting value. Harming ourselves or others is a destructive act; such behavior is the result of ignorance.

That we can, as a result of committed discipline, be intentionally involved with our spiritual growth is clearly stated in all of the major world scriptures. Heaviness and darkness can be removed from the mind by right behavior, and restlessness can be neutralized by cultivating the moral virtues and pure living which contribute to God-realization.

How to Determine Your Own Basic Psychosomatic Constitution

When responding to the questions on the self-evaluation form, consider your characteristics in relationship to your present life-cycle from earliest memory to the present, since some presently existing characteristics may be due to changes recently experienced. Do not think of the characteristics as being good or bad, but simply respond as honestly as you can. You may wish to write the answers

on a separate sheet of paper.

If two or three answers seem to be almost equally true, select the one which seems to you as most accurate. Bear in mind that for a thorough determination, an examination by a qualified Ayurvedic specialist would have to be made because there are subtle characteristics and symptoms you may not be able to discern by yourself. This is but a general self-test and will provide information useful to you in better understanding yourself.

Once you have determined your basic psychosomatic constitution, everything here presented in relationship to balanced living principles will be more meaningful to you because you will be able to relate the information to your own circumstances.

How Governing Principle Influences are Modified

Governing principle influences are balanced in our system by our states of consciousness, the thoughts we think, the emotions we express, the foods we eat, and the environments in which we live. They are influential factors which are subject to modification so we need not think of our present constitutional nature as being permanently fixed or unchangeable.

If the governing principle influences of Water, Fire or Air are disturbed in us, the symptoms of problems associated with each influence can be observed. These can be mild, medium in manifestation or pronounced. If the imbalance is mild, only a little discomfort may be experienced. If medium in manifestation, more obvious symptoms will be apparent. If the imbalance is pronounced, serious discomfort or a diseased condition may be visibly evident.

An aggravation or increase of the Air governing principle (the movement and circulating influence) might be ascertained by evidence of confused speech, emaciation, swarthiness of skin, throbbing of the limbs, desire for hot foods, insomnia, lack of vitality, constipation, tremors, impairment of the functions of the sense organs, giddiness, depression, roughness of skin, sometimes loss of consciousness, atrophy of bone marrow, fear, anxiety, and grief. With decrease of the Air principle influence the symptoms might be diminished movement, depression, stupefaction, and weakness of limbs. One may also be predisposed to diseases due to increase of Water governing principle influences such as, anorexia, nausea, and

variability of appetite.

When the Fire governing principle (the heating, metabolizing influence) is increased it may cause desire for cold food and drink, decreased sleep, loss of strength, weakness of the senses, fainting, yellow coloration of feces, urine and skin, excessive hunger, thirst, burning sensations, hyperacidity, weakening of vital essence (ojas), and a bitter taste in the mouth. When this governing principle influence is decreased the symptoms may be sour stomach, anorexia, indigestion, tremors, heaviness, pallor of nails and eyes, increase in mucus, lack of body radiance, stiffness, and irregular burning and pain sensations in various parts of the body.

When the Water governing principle (moistening, lubricating, grounding influence) is increased, symptoms may include coldness, heaviness, depression, thick sensation in joints, dullness of appetite, cough, light-colored stools, a feeling of fullness of body, blocking of channels through which fluids and subtle forces flow, fainting, whiteness of skin, and sleepiness. When this governing principle influence is decreased, symptoms may be dryness, absence of water substances in usual places of the body except the stomach, thirst, giddiness, general debility, looseness of joints, wakefulness, tachycardia, dehydration, aching, burning, heat, trembling, and loss of consciousness.

In essence, when any of the governing principle influences are aggravated, symptoms will reveal an increase of those influences. When any governing principle influence is decreased, symptoms will reveal a predominance of one or both of the other two governing principle influences. According to need, to balance the governing influences appropriate regimens are chosen.

Unless overly influenced by personal circumstances or habits, the governing principle influences are usually modified during the different seasons of the year because of the active influences present in Nature. For instance, Air influences are accumulated during summer months, aggravated during rainy seasons, and reduced in their actions during autumn. The Fire influences are accumulated during warm rainy seasons, are aggravated in autumn and reduced in early winter. The Water influences are increased in early winter, aggravated in spring, and reduced during the summer months. Because seasonal changes may vary in different parts of the world, adaptations will have to be made when determining their possible

Self-Evaluation Chart for Determining Basic Constitution

Refer to pages 13, 14 for procedure

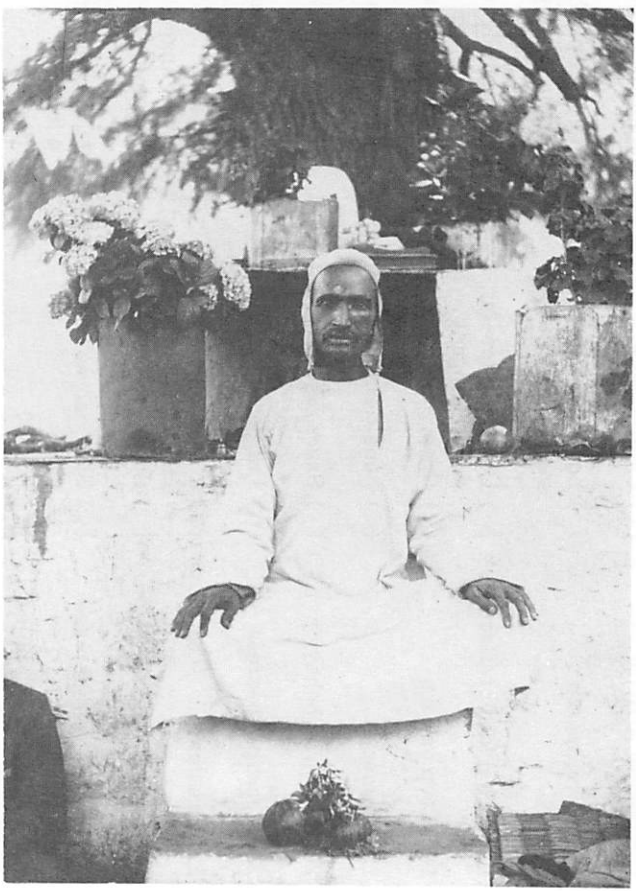
Characteristic	Water	Fire	Air
1. Body	( ) Broad shoulders, hips	( ) Moderate	( ) Narrow shoulders, hips
2. Weight	( ) Heavy	( ) Medium	( ) Thin (tendons show)
3. Endurance; strength	( ) Good	( ) Fair	( ) Poor
4. Skin	( ) Oily, pale, moist, white	( ) Soft, fair, oily, delicate, pink to red	( ) Dry, rough, cool, darker
5. Skin Aging	( ) Smooth, few wrinkles	( ) Freckles, moles, pigmentation	( ) Dry, flaky, wrinkles
6. Hair	( ) Oily	( ) Medium	( ) Dry
7. Hair Color	( ) Medium blonde, medium to dark brown	( ) Light blonde, red, light brown	( ) Dark brown to black
8. Hair Texture	( ) Straight or wavy, thick	( ) Wavy, fine, soft	( ) Curly, kinky
9. Digestion, appetite	( ) Moderate, no extreme hunger	( ) Sharp hunger	( ) Irregular or heavy diet but stays thin
10. Teeth	( ) White, large, little decay	( ) Yellowish, moderate size	( ) Large, protruding, crooked
11. Eyes	( ) Large, blue or brown	( ) Hazel, green, gray	( ) Small, black or brown

12. Elimination	( ) Heavy, slow, thick	( ) Soft, oily, loose	( ) Dry, hard, tendency to constipation
13. Sex Drive	( ) Cyclical, infrequent	( ) Moderate	( ) Frequent
14. Physical Activity	( ) Little or no exercise, lethargic	( ) Enjoys regular exercise	( ) Restless, active
15. Mental Activity	( ) Calm, steady	( ) Aggressive, intelligent	( ) Flighty, restless
16. Voice, speech	( ) Low-pitched, melodious, slow, monotone	( ) Medium-pitched, sharp, laughing	( ) High-pitched, fast, dissonant, vibrato, weeping
17. Taste, food preferences	( ) Dry, light, low-fat, sweet, pungent	( ) Medium, light, sweet, warm, bitter, astringent	( ) Oily, heavy, sweet, soupy, salty, sour
18. Sleep pattern	( ) Deep, prolonged, easy	( ) Sound, medium	( ) Short, insomnia
19. Memory	( ) Long-term memory	( ) Good, not prolonged	( ) Short-term memory
20. Financial behavior	( ) Saves regularly	( ) Saves, but spends on luxuries	( ) Money quickly spent
21. Reaction to stress	( ) Indifferent, complacent, withdraws	( ) Angry, jealous, irritable	( ) Fearful, anxious
22. Dreams	( ) Water, ocean, river, lake, erotic	( ) Fire, war, violence, strife, anger	( ) Fearful, flying, running, jumping
23. Mental predisposition	( ) Stable, logical	( ) Judging, artistic	( ) Questions, theorizes
24. Resting radial pulse (quality)	( ) Slow, moves like a swan	( ) Moderate, jumps like a frog	( ) Thready, slithers like a snake
25. Radial resting pulse (number of beats per minute)	( ) 60—70	( ) 70—80	( ) 80—100 plus

Subtotal *Water* _____ Subtotal *Fire* _____ Subtotal *Air* _____

influences.

Usually, with an increase of any of the governing principle influences in the body, one feels inclined to avoid behaviors and circumstances which might cause further increase and instead do those things which contribute to balance. Therapeutic regimens chosen would include any useful approach to meet existing needs. The obvious approach is to see to spiritual awareness, peace of mind, a balanced diet, sufficient rest, and an appropriate exercise routine. By doing those things which contribute to harmony, unsettled conditions can be corrected and balance maintained.



A saint of the Himalayas: Almora District, India

Realize individualized Supreme Consciousness (soul) to be distinct from the body, sense organs, mind, intelligence, and the unmanifested field of primal Nature; It is the witness of their functions and the ruler of them.

SHANKARA

Removing ignorance by dissolving the ego is the only way to attain absolute knowledge. The aim of practicing Yoga is to dissolve the ego, removing the cause of ignorance.

LAHIRI MAHASAYA

Meditation and Soul-Mastery

HOW TO ADJUST STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS AT WILL

What is the difference between highly aware, functional people and persons who are dysfunctional; between spiritually advanced souls and devotees who are struggling on the path? The only difference is in states of consciousness.

The soul nature is the same, innate capacities are the same, opportunities for learning and growth are the same, and the potential for complete God-realization is the same. What determines these differences? Is it heredity, psychosomatic constitution, karma, environment, degree of formal education, planetary aspects, luck, fate, providence, or any other external circumstance? No, the determining factor is willingness to learn and accomplish.

A disciple, resisting Paramahansa Yogananda's encouragement to overcome his weaknesses, complained, "Sir, you can do the things you advise me to do because you are a master." Paramahansaji replied, "I am what I am because I did what I had to do."

Two of the most obvious obstacles to success on the spiritual path are ego and laziness. Laziness is even more of a problem than ego because ego can be dissolved if one will simply do what needs to be done.

How is laziness to be overcome? By having purpose in life and being committed to that purpose. When we are motivated to do something worthwhile we have more energy, concentration is sharper, decisions are made more precisely, nonessentials are easily disregarded, we are willing to listen and learn, and we are willing to put forth the effort to accomplish our intended purposes.

Merely thinking about possibilities, while helpful in the beginning of a venture, is not sufficient. Action is required, even if it is only the action of adjusting mental states and states of consciousness so that we can begin to embody our heart's desire. At times, other actions are necessary to enable us to learn how to adjust mental states and states of consciousness. Just as faith without results is impotent, so good intentions without follow-through are nonproductive. Therefore, once committed on a useful course of action, boldly initiate procedures to enable you to fulfill your purposes. That is the only way to soul-mastery.

Just as mind is superior to body and intellect is superior to mental processes, so the soul is superior to intellect, mind and body. Intention grounded in being, in soul, is the causative factor in influencing desired changes in attitude, states of consciousness, bodily states and environmental circumstances.

It is true that we are spiritual beings, already grounded in God because God is the life of us. But if we only know this as a concept, if we only believe it but are not experiencing it, we need to learn to adjust our states of consciousness so that we can actually express it. It is sometimes pleasant to read about our relationship with God and that seeking a relationship with God is unnecessary because God is around us and in us, as us. It is true that the relationship is not to be sought exclusively outside of ourselves and that no mental or physical thing we can do will improve upon the relationship with God we already have. But there are mental and physical things we can do to help us truly know and experience God. The mental and physical things we may do, do not cause a condition of God-knowledge and God-union. They only allow us to perceive and experience what is already so, which we may not be able to perceive and experience in present states of consciousness because of confused thinking and stress. Useful techniques or procedures are for the purpose of enabling us to adjust our states of consciousness and prepare our physiology to apprehend the reality of God and express soul qualities.

Many years ago a woman requested meditation instruction. She had been a student of metaphysics for many years and had long practiced contemplative prayer for the purpose of reminding herself that she was "God's perfect expression." A few weeks afterwards, she contacted me and asked for a counseling appointment. During our ensuing conversation she admitted to having a conflict about practic-

ing meditation. She said, "For years I have been taught that I am made in the image and likeness of God and am perfect in every way right now. My problem is, although I enjoy meditation practice, I have inner conflict because it seems that by meditating I am attempting to improve upon my spiritual condition, which can't be improved upon because I'm already, as a soul, perfect."

I agreed with her, that she was a perfect reflection of God's light, and pointed out that the purpose of meditation was not to improve upon her spiritual nature but to remove her attention from environmental and mental distractions in order to more clearly experience it. And that the purpose of Kriya Yoga meditation techniques was not to change her essential soul nature, but to refine the nervous system and body so that her light could more easily shine.

It is important to remain aware of the fact that our spiritual practices are not for the purpose of attaining union with God, for we are already in relationship with God, but to enable us to adjust our states of consciousness so that our relationship can be consciously known. Many sincere devotees have been struggling for years to attain union with God and cannot honestly report any real progress to this end. They may pray, "Oh Lord, when will you come to me?" They may concentrate deeply, hoping to make contact with God. These are understandable devotional yearnings and they often result in adjustments in states of consciousness which allow perception of God. However, such sincere effort and heartfelt yearning does not always result in satisfying spiritual growth because the devotee is attempting to know and experience higher reality while remaining in restricted states of consciousness. And since we can only perceive from the state of consciousness which is ours for the moment, what we see and experience at the moment will be only what we are capable of seeing and experiencing.

Surrendered meditation enables us to experience deep relaxation and mental calm, then with attention released from involvement with physical and mental processes we can explore subtle levels of consciousness. Therefore, we should continue to contemplate the truth about God being within us, as us, as well as beyond us as the universe and Supreme Consciousness. At the same time we should maintain a regular prayer and meditation program for the purpose of inward contemplation in order to experience superconscious states. When we learn how to remain inwardly centered and mentally calm

all of the time, we will discover that even when involved in daily activities our clear awareness of soul and of our relationship with God remains fresh and constant. We will then be able to discern the reality of God in everything. The mystic, Meister Eckhart (1260-1327) wrote: "Of this I am certain: if a soul understood the smallest thing that has isness, it would not turn away from it for an instant. The tiniest thing that one knows in God—if one even knew a flower, so far as it has its isness in God—that would be nobler than the whole world."

Things to Do to Easily Adjust Our States of Consciousness

The average person experiences mood changes and shifts in states of consciousness throughout the day because of mental fluctuations, emotional influences, biochemical and hormonal changes, differences in movements of prana (life force) in the body, and because of unregulated reactions to external circumstances. Mental transformations are almost continually occurring and we are not always aware of processes occurring at conscious, subconscious and unconscious levels of our minds. Thoughts, perceived events and the intrusion of memories can result in emotional changes. Our body chemistry and changes in hormonal secretions can cause changes in moods which, in turn, influence our mental states and states of consciousness. When prana flows are imbalanced, our physiology is influenced and right brain/left brain functions are not synchronized. When we allow ourselves to react to outer circumstances, without being discerning, we may tend to be at the mercy of what is occurring instead of remaining inwardly centered and possessed of understanding.

A most helpful thing to do to contribute to peace of mind and clear states of consciousness is to live a righteous, balanced life, maintain a sensible diet plan, obtain sufficient rest, and attend to metaphysical studies and spiritual practices. When we are healthy, functional and purposeful, optimism and clear perception are more likely to be normal for us. Here are specific things to do:

1. *Learn to Sleep at Will* – For most of us, this is no problem. When we are tired, when the mind and senses require refreshment, we naturally desire to sleep. If you occasionally have difficulty going

to sleep, go to bed, turn out the lights, and mentally pray for a deeper experience of God. Then, in a meditative mood, relax into the inner stillness. Even if you do not sleep immediately, you will at least be using the occasion for spiritual growth benefit. It can also be helpful to recall how pleasant it is to sleep, and to mentally picture yourself going to sleep. Instead of thinking yourself to sleep, *feel* yourself to sleep. A regular sleep routine is also helpful as mind and body quickly adapt to routine. Sleep in God.

2. *Learn to Awaken at Will* – Before going to sleep, decide when you want to awaken. Even when you are asleep, you know what time it is and your predetermined mental intention will cause you to awaken precisely at the time decided upon.

3. *Learn to Dream Consciously* – The most refreshing sleep is experienced when not dreaming. During dreams mental processes are active, emotions are experienced, and sometimes body changes occur in response to mental activity and emotional states. But if you do dream, at least learn to be conscious while dreaming. Just as you decide to awaken at a predetermined time when you want to, you can decide to be conscious when you dream. Just *intend* to do so. Sooner or later, when you are dreaming, you will become more aware and realize, "Why, I'm dreaming!" You can then observe the dream, initiate changes in dream episodes, or awaken from the dream without thoughts or emotions, enabling yourself to experience clear, conscious states while the body rests. There are other interesting things you can do while consciously dreaming. Dreams are usually accompanied by rapid eye movements. Either when just drifting into sleep or when conscious during a dream interlude, look into the spiritual eye and steadily gaze through it into distant inner space. Dream perceptions may then cease because mental fluctuations are stilled. You may then experience superconsciousness, and if subtle mental fluctuations persist you will experience superconscious dreams; that is, dreams which are more astral-like in character and which can contribute to useful insights. Or you may discover that you are mentally clear yet internalized, and will be able to explore inner realms of mind and consciousness by gentle intention. This is done by wanting to perceive or experience in a specific way. This state of consciousness is not unlike the state experienced during deep meditation. You may, while in this state, see into astral realms, become aware of distant places in the physical universe, or contemplate the

possibility of awakening to levels of God consciousness and transcendental perceptions.

4. *Learn to Experience Superconsciousness at Will* – By remembering previous superconscious experiences it is possible to more easily shift awareness to the superconscious level. Also, by looking into the spiritual eye when meditating, and choosing to withdraw from sensory awareness and emotional and mental states, you can experience superconsciousness at will. The psycho-physiological way is to practice Kriya Yoga meditation techniques because these enable you to acquire conscious control over physical and mental processes, allowing awareness to be independent of them. With practice, you can adjust your consciousness to superconscious levels at will, even while functioning during the ordinary routines of the day.

5. *Routine to Acquire Experience* – During a quiet interlude, sit still. Relax. Be soul content. Close your eyes and feel yourself going to sleep, just to the point of drowsiness. Open your eyes and become fully alert. Repeat a few times. Then, remaining still, close your eyes and look into the spiritual eye. Feel yourself opening up to superconscious awareness. Experience emotionless, thoughtless, pure awareness. With practice, you will learn to adjust states of consciousness at will. You will then no longer be at the mercy of external or internal influences. You will progress in the direction of complete soul-mastery; that is, to being able to master your states of consciousness, mental states, physical states, and environmental circumstances by choice.

After resting in superconsciousness for a short interval, let your awareness be integrated with thought processes and feelings. If you want to make decisions about your life, set goals, plan projects, solve problems, or in any way be creatively involved with life, now is the time to do your inner work. You are now functioning from a higher, freer level of awareness and the choices you make will more likely be correct ones and the decisions you make will have constructive outcomes. If you want to pray for another, now is the time to do it. Just invite that person's consciousness into your consciousness and share your clear awareness, your realization of God. This is also an ideal occasion to include all people in the world in your loving concern. If you want to make the process more real to you, envision

yourself with everyone else as being a multitude of lights in God's omnipresent consciousness. Then mentally say, "Hello everyone! All brothers and sisters, everywhere! I love you, I bless you, I rejoice in our fellowship and unity in God!"

Be regular in your practice of daily meditation. This is the single most important routine to contribute to inner unfoldment. Review the basic meditation procedures from time to time to be certain you are practicing correctly. Be patient with yourself and allow time for proficiency to be acquired. Meditation with devotion is many times more effective than mere mechanical practice, so cultivate devotion to God and your meditation experience will dramatically improve. All of the procedures taught in this Lesson Guide series are the ones taught and used by spiritual masters of the ages and are what I have used. Routines are for the purpose of enabling us to intelligently determine our course in life and result-producing techniques and procedures afford us the opportunity to experience for ourselves the freedom we are meant to know and express.

Gathering of devotees in the Meditation Hall at CSA Headquarters, Lakemont, Georgia, during a week-long retreat program.

Personal Comprehension Review

Use this review opportunity to improve your understanding of the Lesson material and facilitate your practice.

1. What are we, as souls, and what are our attributes?

2. What is the most convincing proof of our reality as an immortal soul?

3. What is the purpose of Kriya Yoga practice?

4. Why do not all possible life situations have to be experienced in order for us to be soul fulfilled?

5. What is your present understanding of what your duty in this world is—and what are you doing about it?

6. What are some of the characteristics of your personal basic constitutional nature?

7. How are our systems influenced by the basic governing influences in nature?

8. Be sure to practice the procedures for adjusting your states of consciousness at will.

9. What is the causative factor in influencing desired changes in attitudes, states of consciousness, bodily states and enviromental circumstances?

10. What are you doing to assist personal and planetary wellness?

Think On These Things

Planet Earth, our present abode and future home of billions of souls who will sojourn here, needs to be cherished and nurtured. All people need to be cherished and nurtured and their cultures and traditions respected. While attending to your personal duties and spiritual growth, also be appropriately, actively involved in helping to ensure planetary, social and cultural progress. It is the duty and responsibility of each of us.

When early astronauts orbited the Earth, some of them described it as, "like a blue pearl in space." We frequently hear it referred to as "Spaceship Earth," because it is moving through space around the sun and with the sun in its galactic orbit. Life on Earth is creating special conditions for its own survival. Within this life every organism is linked to every other, all involved in the cycling of energy and nutrients from sun, air, water and land.

Our planet's age is approximately 4 to 5 billion years and the momentum of evolution has brought us to our present conditions. Only in the last 4,500 years has advanced knowledge newly emerged, allowing the progress of civilization revealed by history. In the last 200 years technology has accelerated, causing dramatic changes on the face of the planet and creating, along with many human comforts, severe challenges as Nature's balance is disturbed and a rapidly increasing population makes insistent demands on available resources. Humanity's rapid evolutionary development is resulting in a global crisis which presents a visible challenge that will contribute to a more responsible relationship between people, living things and the physical environment itself.

Challenge can represent both a crucial point in one's life and an opportunity for intellectual, moral and spiritual growth. There have always been natural cataclysmic events to which man has had to learn to adapt. A major challenging event is that of our having to learn to live in harmony with our planet's environment and to provide for the needs of its inhabitants without overloading the biosphere with toxic wastes or depleting natural resources. Only in recent years has the global family become conscious of the need to change behaviors in relationship to the environment and to begin to think in planetary terms instead of local self-serving ways.

In some parts of the world, human population has already exceeded the limits of food production capacities. In many parts of the world where fertile topsoil is abundant, as much as 40 percent of grain produced is used to feed livestock for meat production which, in turn, contributes to disease and various health problems for persons who consume it. Forests are being cut and burned to provide more grazing land, resulting in a disturbance of weather patterns, the destruction of wildlife habitats and the elimination of plant species which could be used for food and medicinal purposes. Industrialization often pollutes the atmosphere, along with the rivers, lakes and oceans. Forty million people die annually from starvation. Five-hundred million are severely undernourished. Over half of the world's people live in substandard conditions. Almost a billion are illiterate, unable to read or write their native language. Only a fraction of a percent of functional, educated people have a reasonably clear understanding of the reality of God and are consciously participating in their own spiritual growth. Less than a fifth of the global population enjoys two-thirds of world wealth. Persons in undeveloped countries, representing 75 percent of the total world population, have 20 percent of the available wealth. Eastern Europeans have access to what remains.

It has been estimated that known reserves of fossil fuel resources, oil and coal, will be depleted during the next century or two. Alternative energy sources will have to be utilized and various possibilities are currently being researched. Population growth continues at an average of 250 thousand people daily or 1 million every four days, with major increases occurring in already overpopulated, undeveloped regions of the world.

A more positive view is that an increasing number of people are becoming more conscious, more responsible, more educated and more spiritually aware. And while it is necessary for every caring person to become more self-responsible and more obviously involved in contributing to planetary wellness and the education and encouragement of fellow human beings who are in need of help, it is important that we remember cosmic and divine influences which are working to contribute to evolutionary unfoldments. The current ascending Electrical Cycle is resulting in mass spiritual awakening and intellectual growth. Therefore, challenges prevailing in our era will be successfully met and a dramatic social and cultural adjustment will

be made over the next several decades, in accord with radical adjustments in the collective consciousness of the human race.

As an increasing number of individuals are becoming more spiritually aware, so will their higher states of consciousness, and their actions, influence the collective consciousness. We already see this occurring. Where, formerly, a few individuals were publicly acknowledged for their insights and constructive actions, now organized efforts are becoming increasingly influential. People are becoming informed, concerned, and involved in more focused, positive ways.

An obvious need in today's awakening world is spiritual education. While physical, emotional and social needs must be met, without spiritual awareness and higher knowledge human beings remain constrained by environmental and cultural circumstances. The material universe has value as a training ground for inner growth leading to higher understanding. With higher understanding, our present situation can be comprehended for what it is—a reflection of cosmic forces influenced by evolutional trends and states of consciousness. The trend of evolution is toward transformation. Divine consciousness, emanating from the Godhead and filtered through human consciousness, is actively influencing the realm of matter. And matter is cosmic energy in obvious manifestation.

Every thought we think influences collective consciousness and the universe itself. Every emotion, every action, similarly influence collective consciousness and the universe. Whenever and wherever superconsciousness is expressed through a person's mind, evolutional forces are assisted.

Whenever you meditate, you beneficially influence your world. When you live in harmony with the rhythms of Nature, you beneficially influence your world. But we must do more than meditate and live righteously. We must also actively be involved in practical ways to assist people in need and to nurture Planet Earth.

The Center for Spiritual Awareness contribution to the welfare of the human race is spiritual education, with emphasis on personal spiritual growth leading to God-realization. Although our active membership is modest in numbers, our influence is far-reaching because of the wide distribution of literature and various other services offered, and because of the transformed lives of an increasing number of people who have been spiritually quickened as a result of association with this ministry. Members and friends in North

America and several other countries comprise a spiritual family whose individual lives and collective consciousness bless their respective communities and the world.

What is not known to the average person is that planetary consciousness is being assisted in its transformation by spiritual forces and the intentional work of highly advanced men and women whose mission it is to facilitate transformation processes through the ages. Our present era is but a transition phase from comparative darkness to an extended planetary cycle of revealing light. This process cannot be prevented. Its causes have origins in God and God's will must prevail.

Because evolutional forces also express through us, to the extent they are able to do so, it is our spiritual opportunity to do what we can to allow them free movement. Wherever there are mental, emotional and physical restrictions, the flow of evolutional forces are hindered. Kriya Yoga procedures assist in removing these restrictions, allowing us to experience spiritual growth and enabling evolutional forces to work with less interference. This is why Kriya Yoga is a spiritual discipline suited to our present Era and why a confused, unfocused approach to knowledge of God and inner unfoldment is not suitable for our times.

This is a time-phase in humanity's evolution during which a more conscious participation with life processes is required. Our conscious participation should include focused purpose, right choice of lifestyle, spiritual practices, ethical behavior, cooperation with others who are engaged in constructive activities, practical help offered to persons who need it, selective use of natural resources (avoiding the wasting of resources and recycling those which can be further utilized), and any and all other useful things we know and learn to do. God is helping us, but we also need to help ourselves and cooperate with transformational processes.

How to Let Your True Self Express

Your true Self is divine. Your true Self is compassionate, caring, omnipresent and entirely comprehending. God, as you, is like this.

But the true Self is often obscured by outer conditions: habitual personality behaviors, rigid attitudes, self-centered preoccupations, and a host of ego-directed concerns. Your true Self wants to express, so let it.

Cultivate wholesome habits, open your mind to new possibilities, be more obviously concerned about others, and dissolve ego boundaries by being of real service. Have a compassionate, caring heart. Let your awareness expand to omnipresence. Let your innate knowledge unfold. Let God, as you, be what God wants to be.

The life you live is the life God lives through you. How are you letting God live through you today? Every morning when you pray, declare, "Today, I will let God live through me as God wants to express. Today, I will respond to every opportunity to learn and serve."

– *Roy Eugene Davis*

CENTER FOR SPIRITUAL AWARENESS
STUDIES IN TRUTH LESSON GUIDE
MASTER COURSE NUMBER FOUR

91

The Avatars and Lightbearers

TIMELY INCARNATIONS OF GOD'S GRACE

The soul is. Under all this running sea of circumstance, whose waters ebb and flow with perfect balance, lies the aboriginal abyss of real Being. Existence, or God, is not a relation or a part, but the whole. Being is the vast affirmative, excluding negation, self-balanced, and swallowing up all relations, parts, and times within itself.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON (1803-1882)
Compensation

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Studies in Truth Lesson Guides are published and distributed by Center for Spiritual Awareness for private use and guided study supervised by acknowledged CSA ministers, teachers and group leaders. Prepared and written by Roy Eugene Davis as an examination of the enlightenment process, with emphasis on the traditions, philosophy and practice of Kriya Yoga. Center for Spiritual Awareness, Post Office Box 7, Lake Rabun Road, Lakemont, Georgia 30552 (U.S.A.) In West Africa: Center for Spiritual Awareness, Post Office Box 507, Accra, Ghana.

I have had many embodiments and so have you; all of them I remember but yours, you do not. Though I am (as Absolute Being) unborn, and my changeless Self is imperishable, though I am (as God manifesting as light and power) the controller of all creatures; establishing myself in my own nature, I come into manifest form through my own magical power. Whenever there is a decline in righteousness, then I send forth myself as a man among men. For the protection of the righteous, for the salvation of the unrighteous, and for the establishment of order and harmony, I come into expression from age to age.

BHAGAVAD GITA 4: 5-8

The Avatars and Lightbearers
TIMELY INCARNATIONS OF GOD'S GRACE

The Sanskrit word *avatara* (from verb roots *ava*, "down" and *tri*, "to pass") is used to designate the descent of God's redeeming power and grace into the field of matter: a divine incarnation.

While all souls are reflected lights of God expressing at various levels of awareness, an avatar is a fully illumined soul which takes human birth because of the redemptive activity of God referred to in religious literature as God's love. Hence the traditional philosophical teaching that "God so loves the worlds he manifested that He forever moves to transform and enlighten them."

Persons of limited understanding, in an attempt to explain this redemptive process, sometimes invent elaborate theological doctrines. The universe is God's own cosmic manifestation and souls, as reflected lights of God, are participants in the process. As explained in the second Lesson of this series, the universe is manifested because of the actions of the cosmic forces (gunas) in the Godhead. The periodic prevailing influence of sattwa guna, the force contributing to expansion carries cosmic forces into expression. This action is explained as God's initial inclination to manifest. After manifestation, because of the *attraction* of sattwa guna, the positive polarity, life forces are unveiled in matter and living forms. When subjective cosmic principles of action are unveiled, plant life emerges. When subjective cosmic principles of action are more unveiled, along with cosmic principles of senses, organisms emerge. When subjective

cosmic principles of intelligence are unveiled, higher life forms and human beings emerge.

Further, when the soul's intuition is unveiled, man becomes soul-aware and begins his conscious spiritual growth. Man's innate intelligence and awakened intuition enable him to satisfy his curiosity about the universe, the field of Nature. Beyond this, he can explore his own inner nature and the reality of God. In the process, his steadily increasing awareness enables him to experience shifts from simple self-consciousness to soul awareness, then to superconscious states, cosmic conscious perceptions, God-realization and liberation of consciousness.

A *saint* can be described as one through whom divine qualities are expressed. A saintly person may not yet be fully enlightened but is manifesting characteristics of God consciousness. A soul surrendered to God and living by grace, but with some remaining inner restrictions to dissolve or transcend, is said to have attained the state of salvation—inwardly spiritually free while embodied, which means the devotee is firmly on the enlightenment path and need not again become involved with consciousness-darkening relationships or influences. Only karmic impressions remaining from the results of past actions and experiences have yet to be cleansed. Saints and spiritually free souls are *lightbearers*. Divine possibilities are revealed through them, we see in them our own future possibilities and their presence on Earth transforms planetary consciousness with beneficial influences.

Saints and spiritually free souls who are "working out their salvation," their final freedom in God, are often still functioning through personality and adapt to cultural and societal modes in ways most convenient for their purposes. Their knowledge of higher reality is not yet infallible. Only fully illumined souls are conscious of complete knowledge of God and universal processes.

While normal curiosity may incline us to speculate about higher states of consciousness and the relative levels of attainment of saints and spiritual masters, and some contemplation of such matters can be useful in expanding our consciousness, it is best not to overly indulge in such efforts because of the conditioned tendency to project our own assumptions upon the object of our examination. We cannot really determine the state of consciousness of another, or the reasons for their behavior, until we are functioning from a similar level of

understanding. Such speculations as "which master is the highest," "which is the ultimate avatar manifestation in the world today," and "what roles did certain masters play in previous eras," may engage our attention, be diversions from our own needs and purposes, and result in superficial judgments which serve no useful purpose. Sri Yukteswar once said, "Would-be disciples often look for a guru made in their own image." That is, they attempt to find a spiritual teacher who satisfies their ego needs, instead of one who can show them how to experience illumination of consciousness. It is good to know that spiritual masters are present with us in spacetime; it is better for us to aspire to become like them. Confused reasoning, illusion, and fantasy are products of unclear states of consciousness. Unclear reasoning results in false conclusions. Illusions are due to misperception, causing us to conclude that we know when we do not know. Fantasy contributes to the imaginal concepts we entertain in an attempt to satisfy our longing to experience genuine spiritual growth.

The Lineage of this Kriya Yoga Tradition

Kriya Yoga, the way of transforming action, is a universal way with many lines of teaching transmission. Being universal, it cannot be limited to any single line of teachers or organized movement. Paramahansaji often said, "The world is a big place and there is room in it for everyone." We can also say, "The universe is so vast and the needs and psychological characteristics of people are so diverse, that many lines of communication are required to serve the cause of evolution." We are attracted to an enlightenment tradition which best meets our psychological and spiritual needs. Therefore, if we are surrendered in our seeking, we will be led to the destined relationship which will enable us to experience rapid spiritual growth.

God is the supreme guru, the ultimate revealer of truth to the devotee. Enlightened teachers can play the outer role of guru, but it is God's grace which is ultimately influential in unveiling the seeking soul's mind and consciousness. By learning from enlightened people, our spiritual education is accomplished more efficiently. By willingly entering into spiritual growth processes, our soul unfoldment is accelerated. Paramahansaji often referred to the Kriya path as the "airplane" way to God-realization. When desiring to travel to a chosen destination, our journey can be direct or various and diverse

routes can be taken. The destination is the same but one way is faster than the other.

We are living in a time cycle during which knowledge of Nature is being revealed at an astounding rate of speed. What is not being revealed as quickly is knowledge of soul and God. It is in accord with evolutionary trends that outer conditions be known before inner ones, because man must work through his senses and intellect. Even so, spiritual realities are fast coming within range of man's perceptual faculties and increasing numbers of people are sincerely inquiring into the inner side of life. Doctrines and traditions, as useful as they sometimes are to unawakened man, no longer satisfy the heart, the soul, the being, of devotees who aspire to know the final truth about the purpose of life and the reality of God. Our present era is one in which the philosophical teachings here explained can be more easily grasped and the recommended practices utilized. An obvious degree of awakened intelligence is required if one is to comprehend this philosophy and a higher level of spiritual awareness is needed to intuitively sense the usefulness of Kriya Yoga meditation practices, and to use them with benefit. We are here dealing with inner matters and an outer perception of life is not adequate to the process of discovery of higher realities.

Just before Paramahansaji traveled from India to America, in 1920, he prayed in his Calcutta home for guidance. Mahavatar Babaji came to him in his physical form to assure him of the destined purpose of his mission to the West. The illumined master said, "Kriya Yoga, the scientific technique of God-realization, will ultimately spread to all lands, and aid in the harmonizing of the nations through man's personal, transcendental perception of the Infinite." Through the life and teachings of Lahiri Mahasaya and his brother and sister disciples, through Paramahansa Yogananda and his organization and his disciples, myself among them, and through the CSA ministry, the Kriya Yoga tradition and teaching emphasis revived by Babaji is fulfilling his prophecy. In the 130 year period since Babaji first initiated Lahiri Mahasaya and authorized him to more openly teach Kriya Yoga methods, well over a million seeking souls were initiated into practice. With the dawning of the 21st century multiplied millions more will be attracted to this spiritual growth, soul liberating path.

Babaji is referred to as a "great" (*maha*, Sanskrit) avatar because

of his high spiritual state and because his major role is to work with spiritually advanced gurus and teachers who serve in a more outward way. Through the centuries he has maintained his physical body, first by using a little known physical rejuvenation procedure and now by his superior divine realization. He has said that centuries ago he initiated many saints of other traditions into Kriya Yoga practices, including Shankara (8th century philosopher-saint) and Kabir. For many decades before and after the beginning of the 20th century he was known to reside in the Himalayan region near Badrinarayan, as well as Nepal and Tibet. Paramahansaji predicted that from time to time certain yogis would claim to be Mahavatar Babaji but their assertions would not be true. This has already occurred on a few occasions. Unfortunately, even the yogic community is not without its false prophets. Babaji is a commonly used name by holy men and means "Revered Father."

There are always enlightened souls on the planet. Their presence can be known by persons sufficiently conscious to acknowledge them. When prevailing social conditions are not suitable for their public manifestation, they remain in seclusion or function in society unknown to persons whose interests are focused on purely secular or material concerns.

Babaji has said that he will remain on Earth at least for the duration of the present world cycle. His words, spoken to a disciple of Lahiri Mahasaya in the presence of Lahiri and of his (Babaji's) sister were, "I shall never leave my physical body. It will always remain visible to at least a small number of people on this earth." Babaji's sister, Mataji ("Revered Mother") is also highly spiritually advanced.

Mortal-immortals, like Babaji, remain involved with planetary evolution through eons of time as part of the evolutional process. They are not like some aspiring devotees who wish for immortal life in the body for the purpose of enjoyment or to exercise extraordinary powers. They are entirely submissive to God's will and function only as servants of God to contribute to the cosmic order and elevate aspiring souls to divine awareness.

The religious history of Asia and the Middle East includes references to avatars of God, such as Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Jesus, and some who lived in China and Tibet. Agastya, who is credited with dozens of written works on medicine, chemistry and related topics,

is believed by South Indian devotees to be a mortal-immortal. He was publicly active during the centuries preceding and following the time of Jesus and is said to retain his body to this day.

Agastya's writings form some of the literature comprising the holistic wellness system known as Siddha Medicine, which evolved in South India and was later incorporated into the North Indian Ayurvedic system. A special emphasis in Siddha Medicine, besides routine regimens and herbal knowledge, is the use of ashes of burnt metals, ingested in minute quantities to impart potent influences upon body chemistry. The medical texts of the South Indian siddhas were first written in Tamil, the language of the region, frequently in poetic form. In more recent years these texts are being examined and their procedures researched and more widely applied.

Some avatars and lightbearers are almost totally involved with humanity's spiritual progress, while others are quietly active in social reform, the arts and sciences and even in political fields. Not only can individuals benefit from the spiritual teachings and quickening influences of God-realized persons, but the entire trend of evolution from time to time is given a dramatic impulse in the direction of fulfillment of cosmic purposes. Being entirely surrendered to God's will, great seers and saints have no personal interest in public acclaim and no need to demonstrate their abilities except for the purpose of constructively intervening in circumstances when a need is present, and in contributing to the maintenance of worthy conditions and the orderly transformation of world conditions from lower to higher levels. Though at times using ordinary methods to communicate their ideas and accomplish their purposes, more often they extend their influence through telepathic means and by gentle intention supported by clear realization.

Some avatars visit the Earth plane briefly to fulfill a specific need. Others, such as Babaji and mortal-immortals like him, remain here for extended durations of time to assist with the relatively slow progress of evolution from Age to Age. Many return again and again, resting between incarnations in God consciousness or functioning as spiritual helpers in astral spheres. Paramahansa Yogananda said he would return to spend an incarnation with some of his advanced disciples and with Babaji. Sri Yukteswar materialized before Paramahansaji shortly after his transition and said that he was working with spiritually advanced souls on a high astral plane. Lahiri

Mahasaya also materialized before a disciple the day after his transition and said, "From the atoms of my cremated body, I have produced this form. My outer obligations in the world are done, but I do not leave this earth entirely. Hereafter I will spend some time with Babaji in space, and with him in the Himalayas."

Enlightened masters, no longer attached to outer forms and rituals, often counsel disciples to adhere to the traditional practices of their choice for as long as they serve a useful purpose. Lahiri, for instance, recommended that a Moslem should worship five times a day in accordance with his religious tradition, a Hindu should meditate several times a day, and a Christian should pray several times a day. All should read the scripture which satisfies the heart. Paramahansaji, too, while emphasizing the Kriya tradition referred to his teaching centers as "a church of all religions." He counseled me, and other ministers to recommend a church or teaching to meet the needs of people who came to us but who were not yet ready for the Kriya path. He often said, "It is only the followers of the masters who sometimes engage in disputes over doctrine—the masters enjoy good fellowship and get along very well together."

An enlightenment tradition, to be vital and life-transforming, must have representatives who are God-conscious and surrendered to His will. In this way a definite spiritual force is transmitted to devotees of that tradition, flowing from the field of God through the guru line. Paramahansaji told me, and other ministers, "When you initiate into Kriya Yoga, I, or one of the gurus, will always be there." He also said, "If you are faithful to this path to the end of your earth life, when you die to this world one of the gurus will be there to usher you into the Infinite."

Even an illumined master cannot compel a person to change against his will, or overly quicken the process of human evolution. Such a one can set an example, restore virtue in receptive hearts, make spiritual teachings available, and encourage awakening souls to help themselves to wellness and spiritual growth. It is we who must choose the higher way, when we are able to do so, when we want to do so sincerely enough. The only difference between a sense-bound person, an earnest devotee seeking the light, and a spiritual master, is the state of consciousness of each. At the inmost level of being, all souls are grounded in the unbounded field of pure consciousness out of which the worlds emerged and by which they are maintained. At

this level is perfection, knowledge and freedom. This truth only has to be consciously realized. It is realized by choice, by surrender to God, by disciplined behavior, and by God's grace.

What is needed by the devotee, is to contemplate the reality of God and the reality of the soul as God-expressing. We often have an "almost" awareness of the reality of God and the reality of our own being but our habit of identifying with personality characteristics may cause difficulty in clearly experiencing this. Some Christian mystics of a few centuries ago referred to this sense of intellectual heaviness as "the cloud of unknowing." During this condition we feel ourselves very close to apprehending the truth while, at the same time, are unable to do so. Sometimes we are afraid of breaking through because of being uncertain of what changes we may have to confront or allow. At other times we sincerely want to know clearly but are unable to do so because of mental, emotional and physical restrictions.

The purpose of Kriya Yoga practice is to remove such restrictions. When this is accomplished, our innate perfection spontaneously manifests. Along with useful practical procedures, it is helpful to continue to contemplate the possibility of clear realization and soul actualization because we are inclined to experience what we sincerely anticipate. Therefore, it is helpful to constantly remember our real nature as pure consciousness and to endeavor to live from soul awareness at all times. We often err in attempting to know soul freedom while, at the same time, continuing to identify with the human condition. We may want to awaken spiritually while continuing to routinely think, feel and behave in habitual, conditioned ways. If we sincerely want to unfold our soul capcities, if we honestly want to allow the full reality of God to express in and as our lives, we have to learn to release all attitudes and behaviors which are inconsistent with this ideal.

Man finds it hard to get what he wants, because he does not want the best. God finds it hard to give, because He would give the best, and man will not take it.

GEORGE MACDONALD (1824-1905)

All wisdom comes from the Lord and is with him forever. The sand of the sea, the drops of rain, and the days of eternity—who can count them? The height of heaven, the breadth of the earth, the abyss, and wisdom—who can search them out? Wisdom was created before all things, and prudent understanding from eternity.

THE OLD TESTAMENT APOCRYPHA
Ecclesiasticus 1: 1-4

Lifestyle Guidelines

LIVING IN HARMONY WITH THE RHYTHMS OF NATURE

Food is consciousness. It not only provides carbohydrates, proteins, vitamins, minerals, enzymes and other nutrients for the body; it also provides life force and the triple cosmic forces in Nature which influence our psychosomatic constitution. Food selection, preparation and ingestion should be a conscious exercise because end results will affect body, mind and spiritual awareness.

Food should be acquired with conscious intent. If harvested, it should be collected with care and a thankful heart. If purchased or obtained by any means the transaction should be honest and in the spirit of appreciation. Food dishonestly acquired, or paid for with resources which have been dishonestly obtained, will not be as enjoyed and beneficially utilized by the body. Negative mental and emotional influences will interfere with its utilization.

Fresh, live foods should be selected for personal use and for offering to family members and guests. Persons employed in any food service enterprise should be aware that they are offering food as consciousness to buyers and customers. In this way all transactions become a spiritual exercise which benefit both the supplier and those who are served.

Food should be prepared in a clean, quiet environment. Everything involved in the process should be pure, including the mental state and state of consciousness of the preparer. A person who is sick,

angry, moody, or emotionally disturbed should not prepare food for others.

In this conscious approach to food use, even though foods may be recommended to meet specific constitutional needs, a wide variety is available to provide all nutritional needs. Because variety is recommended, there is little need to be overly concerned about having a balanced diet. The emphasis here will be upon providing the basic psychosomatic constitution with the most useful balance of Water, Fire and Air governing principle influences to meet individual needs.

The Ayurvedic approach to food use is unique in that it deals with the *tastes* of foods as indicators of the presence of the governing principle influences which will affect the body's cosmic forces. This may seem a bit unusual when first confronted, but it will be better understood as we examine the causes of tastes. Six tastes are recommended at most meals, with the exception of special instances where tastes are prescribed in greater or lesser measure for specific purposes.

The combination of Earth and Water element influences in Nature produces the sweet taste. The combination of Earth and Fire element influences produces the sour taste. The combination of Water and Fire element influences produces the salty taste. The combination of Air and Ether element influences produces the bitter taste. The combination of Earth and Air element influences produces the astringent taste. The combination of Fire and Air element influences produces the pungent taste.

It is then easy to see that foods containing the governing principle influences will have their effects on body and mind when used in one's diet plan. For instance, sweet, sour and salty tastes will increase Water governing principle and decrease the Air governing principle. Pungent, bitter and astringent tastes will increase Air influence and decrease the influence of Water. Pungent and salty tastes will increase Fire. Sweet, bitter and astringent tastes will decrease Fire. In other words, if the governing principle influence is present in foods, it will increase that condition in the body. If absent, the corresponding conditions will be decreased. This is an easy way to select foods for the purpose of contributing to physical wellness, emotional satisfaction and mental peace.

Food qualities are also classified as heavy, oily or moist, light or dry, and hot or cold. As a general rule heavy, oily foods increase

Water influences and decrease Air influences. Light, dry foods increase Air and decrease Water. Hot or cold foods, respectively, increase or decrease Fire.

Water should not usually be taken immediately before or after a meal because it tends to dilute digestive juices. Water taken before a meal may contribute to weight loss and taken after a meal may contribute to weight gain. Milk and soups can be taken with the meal, and small quantities of water or compatible fluids if food is dry.

Honey, as a sweetening agent, should not be used in excess and always in its natural state as heating destroys part of the nutrient value. Honey, milk, and clarified butter are sometimes used with herbs for the purpose of transporting herbal influences more deeply into the intended body systems.

The amount of food eaten at any one meal should be moderate. The general advice is a quantity that would fill a person's two cupped hands. An easy approach is to eat in a relaxed, cheerful mood and only until you feel comfortable and still light.

A common mistake of persons new to a vegetarian food regimen is to attempt to replace meat by choosing instead, eggs, cheese and nuts in larger quantities than can be easily processed by the body. Nuts in moderation are all right. Soft cheeses are preferred over hard cheeses which are about 60 percent fat. Since amino acids are separated and recombined in the body, all necessary amino acids can be assimilated from a sensible vegetarian diet. Proteins are not stored in the body after digestion so excess becomes waste products which work a hardship on the body and can contribute to ill health.

Herbs can be used as food seasoning agents as well as for their therapeutic effects, but salt and white sugar should be avoided.

When we ingest foods we are interacting with the cosmos. We interact with the cosmos through all of our senses but it is with the food that we take into the body that cosmic forces directly influence our basic constitution. The atomic structures of carbohydrates, proteins, vitamins, and minerals are not very different, varying only in combination but not in essence. Below the atomic level are finer forces which have origins in the field of pure consciousness. Nature is provided with everything necessary for function and completion of purposes. When we learn to intelligently cooperate with Nature's laws we are able to enter into a conscious, useful relationship with the cosmos.

The Inner Properties and Actions of Foods

Foods are classified according to their tastes when first eaten; their sensations or actions (hot or cold); and the post-digestive action, the effects of foods after digestion. Some tastes change as a result of being digested. This will be noted as we follow along with a description of some common foods. We will begin with fruits, followed by vegetables, grains and other foods. The post-digestive taste will be listed only if it changes due to the changes occurring during digestion.

Apple: Sweet and astringent. Cooling. Sweet post-digestive effect. Light, rough. Increases Air, decreases Fire. All right for Water constitutional types in moderate quantities.

Banana: Sweet and astringent. Cooling. Sour post-digestive taste. Smooth, heavy, laxative in quantity. Increases Water and Fire. Decreases Air.

Coconut: Sweet. Cooling. Oily, smooth. Increases Water governing principle and decreases Air and Fire.

Figs: Sweet, cooling. Heavy, nourishing. Increases Water. Decreases Fire and Air.

Grapes (purple): Sweet, sour and astringent. Cooling. Sweet post-digestive effect. Smooth, watery. Increases Water. Decreases Fire and Air.

Melons: Sweet. Cooling. Heavy, watery. Reduces Fire and Air.

Oranges: Sweet and sour. Heavy, promotes appetite. Increases Water and Fire. Decreases Air.

Peaches: Sweet and astringent. Heating. Sweet post-digestive effect. Heavy, watery. Increases Water and Fire. Decreases Air.

Pears: Sweet and astringent. Cooling. Sweet post-digestive effect. Heavy, dry, rough. Increases Air. Decreases Water and Fire.

Plums: Sweet and astringent. Heating. Sweet post-digestive effect. Heavy, watery. Increases Fire and Water. Decreases Air.

Pomegranate: Sweet, sour and astringent. Cooling. Sweet post-digestive effect. Smooth, oily. Increases Air. Decreases Fire and Water.

Beet: Sweet, heating. Heavy, smooth. Can increase Water and Fire if eaten in excess. Decreases Air.

Broccoli: Sweet and astringent. Cooling. Pungent post-digestive

effect. Rough, dry. Increases Air. Decreases Fire and Water.

Cabbage: Sweet and astringent. Cooling. Pungent post-digestive effect. Rough, dry. Increases Air. Decreases Fire and Water.

Carrot: Sweet, bitter and astringent. Cooling. Pungent post-digestive effect. Heavy. Increases Fire if consumed in excess. Decreases Water and Air.

Cauliflower: Astringent. Cooling. Pungent post-digestive effect. Rough, dry. Increases Air. Decreases Fire and Water.

Celery: Astringent. Cooling. Pungent post-digestive effect. Rough, dry, light. Increases Air. Decreases Fire and Water.

Lettuce: Sweet and astringent. Cooling. Sweet post-digestive effect. Heavy. Increases Water. Decreases Air and Fire.

Okra: Sweet and astringent. Cooling. Pungent post-digestive effect. Rough, dry, slippery. All right for all three constitutional types.

Raw Onion: Pungent. Heating. Heavy, stimulating. Strengthening. Increases Air and Fire. Decreases Water.

Potato: Sweet, salty, astringent. Cooling. Sweet post-digestive effect. Rough, dry, light. Increases Air. Decreases Fire and Water.

Spinach: Astringent. Cooling. Pungent post-digestive effect. Rough, dry. Increases Air and Fire. Decreases Water.

Sprouts: Mildly astringent. Cooling. Sweet post-digestive effect. Light. All right for all constitutional types but may aggravate Air if consumed in excess.

Tomato: Sweet and sour. Heating. Sour post-digestive effect. Light, moist. Increases all three governing principles.

Zucchini: Sweet and astringent. Cooling. Pungent post-digestive effect. Wet, light. Decreases Fire. *May* increase Water. All right for Air types.

Barley: Sweet and astringent. Cooling. Sweet post-digestive effect. Light. Increases Air. Decreases Fire and Water.

Basmati Rice: Sweet. Cooling. Light, soft, smooth and nourishing. Decreases Air and Fire. All right for Water types in moderation.

Brown Rice: Sweet. Heating. Heavy. Increases Fire and Water. Decreases Air.

Buckwheat: Sweet and astringent. Heating. Sweet post-digestive effect. Light, dry. Increases Air and Fire. Decreases Water governing principle.

Corn: Sweet. Heating. Light, dry. Increases Air and Fire. Decreases Water.

Oats: Sweet. Heating. Heavy. Dry oats increase Air and Fire and decrease Water. Cooked oats increase Water and decrease Air and Fire.

Millet: Sweet. Heating. Light, dry. Increases Air and Fire. Decreases Water governing principle.

Rye: Sweet and astringent. Heating. Sweet post-digestive effect. Light, dry. Increases Air and Fire. Decreases Water governing principle.

Wheat: Sweet. Cooling. Heavy. Increases Water. Reduces Air and Fire.

Almonds: Sweet. Heating. Heavy, oily. Increases Fire and Water. Decreases Air. Energizer, rejuvenator.

Cashews: Sweet. Heating. Heavy, oily. Increases Fire and Water. Decreases Air. Energizing.

Peanuts: Sweet and astringent. Heating. Sweet post-digestive effect. Heavy, oily. Increases Fire and Water. All right for Air types if used in moderation.

Pumpkin Seed: Sweet, bitter and astringent. Heating. Pungent post-digestive effect. Heavy, dry. Increases Fire and Water. Decreases Air.

Sunflower Seed: Sweet and astringent. Heating. Sweet post-digestive effect. Heavy, oily. Mildly increases Fire and Water. Decreases Air.

Lentils: Sweet and astringent. Heating. Sweet post-digestive effect. Dry, rough, heavy and should only be taken in small quantities because of tendency to dehydrate the body. Increases Air and Water. Decreases Fire.

Mung Beans: Sweet and astringent. Cooling. Sweet post-digestive effect. Light, soft. Increases Water. Decreases Fire and Air.

Soy Beans: Sweet and astringent. Cooling. Sweet post-digestive effect. Heavy, oily, smooth. Increases Air and Water. Decreases Fire. Tofu is all right in moderation.

Kidney Beans: Sweet and astringent. Sweet post-digestive effect. Dry and rough. Laxative effect. Increases Air and Water. Decreases Fire.

Honey: Sweet and astringent. Heating. Sweet post-digestive effect. Dry, rough, heavy. Breaks up mucus. Mildly increases Fire. Decreases Water and Air governing principles.

Sesame Oil: Sweet, bitter and astringent. Heating. Sweet post-

digestive effect. Heavy, oily, smooth. Increases Fire. Decreases Air. All right for Water types in moderation.

Sunflower Oil: Sweet. Cooling. Light, oily, strengthening to the system. All right for all three constitutional types.

Safflower Oil: Sweet and pungent. Heating. Pungent post-digestive effect. Relatively light, sharp, oily, irritating if used in excess. Increases Fire. Decreases Water and Air.

Corn Oil: Sweet. Heating. Relatively light, oily, smooth. Increases Fire. All right for Water and Air types in moderation.

Ghee (clarified butter): Sweet. Cooling. Light, oily, and smooth. Useful for all three governing principle types if taken in moderation. Taken in excess it increases Water influence. Promotes digestion, strengthens the system and is useful when taking herbal remedies.

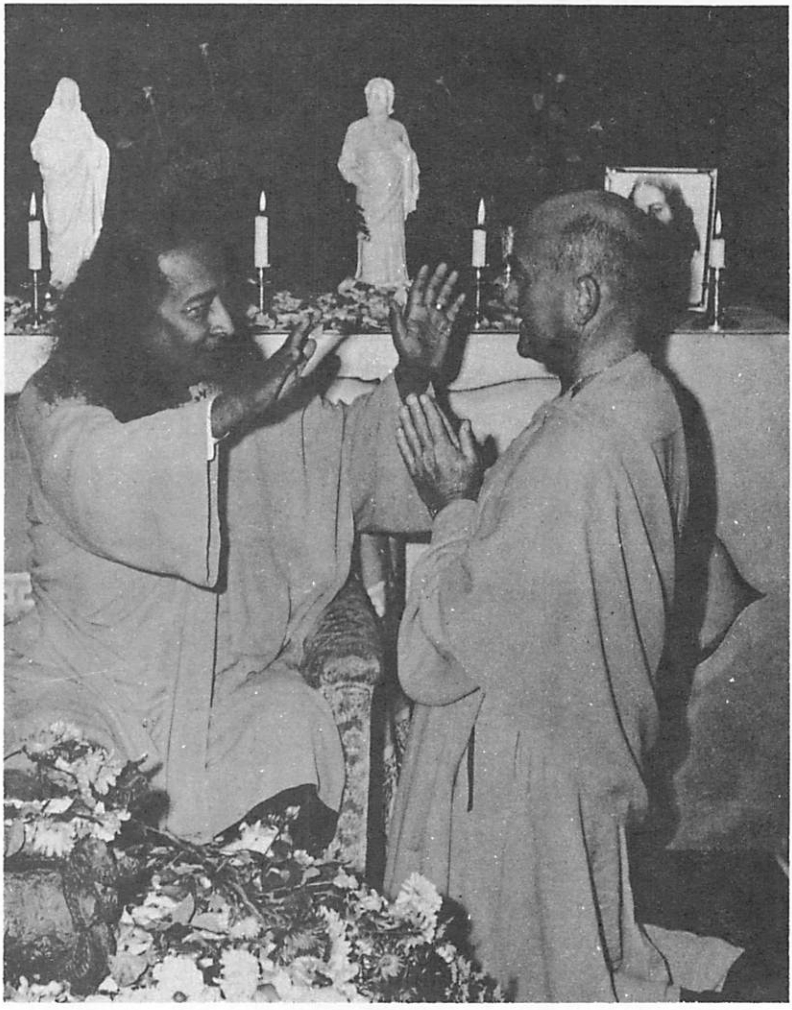
Goat's Milk: Sweet and astringent. Cooling. Sweet post-digestive effect. Light. Increases Air. Decreases Fire and Water governing principles.

Cow's Milk: Sweet. Cooling. Light, oily, smooth. Increases Water. Decreases Fire and Air.

This is but a brief overview of foods, their qualities and effects according to Ayurveda. It provides insight into the approach taken when planning food needs, either for maintaining the balance of the governing principles or for therapeutic purposes.

How to Prepare Clarified Butter

To use in place of other oils to sauté vegetables or in place of regular butter (but in smaller quantities). Put one pound of butter in a heavy pan, over medium heat. Simmer for approximately 15 minutes. The water will evaporate out and the solids will float to the top. Some solids will sink to the bottom of the pan. When a drop of water dripped into the clarified butter crackles, remove from heat. Allow to cool, then strain through a clean cloth into a jar. Store in a cool place. If used frequently, leave it out where it will be convenient. It will not turn rancid or spoil.



Paramahansa Yogananda blessing Mr. J. J. Lynn, a long-time disciple and spiritually advanced Kriya Yoga devotee. Mr. Lynn was also a highly successful business executive.

Others, who are devoted to life force control, having restrained the movements of the alternating flows of vital forces in the body, neutralize these flows and rise beyond the body and mind into awareness of Transcendental Being. *BHAGAVAD GITA 4: 29*

By regulating the breath as directed by the spiritual teacher, the holy word (OM) spontaneously manifests and becomes audible. When this occurs, the breath becomes naturally regulated and slows the biological aging processes of the body. The inner sound is perceived in various ways, according to the devotee's degree of receptivity.
SWAMI SRI YUKTESWAR

The Breath-Mind-Meditation Relationship
MASTER KEYS TO SUPERCONSCIOUS CONTEMPLATION

While living a God-surrendered, righteous life is helpful to spiritual growth, there is something more we can do to improve meditative contemplation and expand consciousness. We can learn, use, and experience *pranayama*, the regulation of life forces, either by intentional control of the breath or as a spontaneous result of superconscious influence. Pranayama techniques are used to intentionally regulate breathing rhythms, while spontaneous balancing of life forces is the result of experiencing superior states of consciousness.

Breath provides prana (life force) to the body. This force, acting on the Air element influence, causes movement and provides the vital spirit which enlivens the systems. The word *spirit* (Latin *spiritus*, "breath") is frequently used in religious literature because it is understood that God's "breath" is the life force which animates matter.

Man's aspirations for higher realization are often in conflict with his instinctive and conditioned drives as well as his unregulated emotional states. By practicing pranayama one can learn to easily control instinctive urges, conditioned behaviors and mood changes in order to function at more optimum levels.

That there is a relationship between breathing patterns and mental and emotional activity can easily be determined by observa-

tion. The breathing process sustains the image forming processes in the mind. When breathing is slowed and refined, mental images become less dominant and more refined. When breathing is minimal during meditation, and prana flows are balanced, mental images cease to manifest in the mind. Practice will verify this. One of the main obstacles to success in meditation practice is the continual manifestation of mental imagery produced by restless flows of prana in the body. If you have been practicing mantra meditation on a regular schedule you have already experienced the useful changes which can occur as a result.

During the course of a 24 hour day breathing will usually occur more dominantly through one nostril and then through the opposite nostril for approximately two hours each, alternating from one to the other throughout the day. Nasal tissue swells slightly in one nostril, partially blocking air flow and causing the opposite nostril to be more active. When air flows with more force through the right nostril the right hemisphere of the brain is somewhat cooled, causing the left hemisphere to be more active. When air flows with more force through the left nostril the opposite effect occurs. This partially accounts for our changes in moods throughout the day and night.

The right nasal breath is referred to as the "sun" or solar breath. The left nasal breath is referred to as the "moon" or lunar breath. When the solar breath is flowing, the left hemisphere of the brain is more dominant. One is then more outgoing, more analytical, decisive and aggressive. When the lunar breath is flowing the right hemisphere of the brain is more dominant. One is then more introverted, given to illusions, uncertain about choices and passive. Left brain dominance is useful to accomplishment of purposes in overt ways and to performing executive actions which require the "heat" of solar influence. Right brain dominance is useful when performing quiet, artistic and culturing activities which require the "coolness" of lunar influence.

Many people admit to being subject to mood swings or to being dominated by emotional states which they cannot seem to control by an act of will alone. Try this experiment: when caught in a mood or emotional state which inhibits function, observe your breathing pattern as well as which nostril seems more open. Then slow your breathing rhythm a little bit while closing off with your finger the nostril which is more open, making the breath flow through the

nostril which seems more closed. After a few minutes you will notice a definite positive change in mood and emotional state.

Right nostril breathing increases acidic secretions, left nostril breathing increases alkaline secretions. In this way breathing directly changes body chemistry by influencing the brain. Brain chemistry influences body functions, including temperature, blood pressure, hormonal secretions and the rhythms which determine activity or rest.

Yogic texts emphasize the activities of three major channels in relationship to the spinal pathway through which prana flows. The right channel (*pingala*) carries the solar force. The left channel (*ida*) carries the lunar force. The central channel (*sushumna*) flows through the chakras. Prana flowing through these channels influences the nervous system, internal organs and body chemistry. These prana channels originate in the base chakra and terminate in the brain. In spiritually unawakened persons prana flows are more dominant through the solar and lunar channels. With spiritual awakening, the more influential force known as *kundalini* (dormant potential force) becomes more pronounced, enlivening all body systems, balancing internal forces and contributing to expansion of consciousness.

When solar and lunar forces are most active, consciousness is somewhat dominated by mental processes and emotional states. When kundalini is active, mental processes are more orderly (and can be stilled at will) and soul awareness makes possible regulation of emotional states.

To determine which nostril is dominant do this: 1) Close one nostril to find out if breath flowing through the opposite one is smooth and unobstructed. The nostril through which air flows most easily is the dominant one at that time. 2) Breathe out quickly several times. A cooler sensation will be experienced in the dominant nostril. If both nostrils are equally functioning, sushumna influence will be more dominant and there will be more left brain/right brain balance at that time.

When you want to change the breath flows, do this: 1) Close off the dominant nostril until the one through which breath flow is obstructed begins to operate easily. 2) Lie down on the same side as the dominant nostril, with a small cushion or pillow under the armpit on that side. Ordinarily a change will be noticed in a few minutes. If

body chemistry is unbalanced, if one is ill, if one is very emotional, it will take longer for change to occur. 3) With practice you can adjust nostril dominance at will, by merely putting your attention on the obstructed nasal passage and "wanting" it to be more open.

Pranayama for Centering, Concentration and Meditation

While surrendered devotion can result in spontaneous balancing of prana flows so that sushumna currents become dominant, pranayama practice is the direct approach to preparing body and mind for easy concentration and fruitful meditation.

When you first sit to meditate, practice alternate nostril breathing. Inhale rather deeply, hold for a few moments, exhale almost completely, pause, and repeat. Do this three or four times, smoothly and comfortably. Never strain when practicing pranayamas and do not restrain the breath to the point of discomfort.

Then, after the last exhalation, hold the right nostril closed and breathe in normally through the left nostril...pause...exhale through the right nostril...pause...inhale through the right nostril... pause...exhale through the left nostril...pause...and repeat 5 to 10 times. Then proceed with meditation.

Do this pranayama with eyes closed and gazing into the spiritual eye. Be relaxed and just go with the natural flow. Let the process occur easily. Daily practice will demonstrate its usefulness, provide the opportunity to experience positive changes in emotional and mental states, cleanse (open) the channels through which prana flows in the body, and internalize your attention more easily. It will also, in time, encourage movement of kundalini force in the central pathway of the spine, bringing it into the brain centers. When this occurs, subtle internal sound frequencies are more easily discerned in the inner ear when listening for the OM vibration. It will also make it easier to perceive light at the spiritual eye when concentration becomes steady.

When meditating, use your mantra or any process which is most helpful to you. Be intent without straining to accomplish. The most useful state is that of relaxed conscious alertness. By intentionally meditating with result-producing techniques we actively direct attention to the purpose of meditation instead of allowing our awareness to be dominated by restless thoughts and emotional influences.

Once thought processes are refined and feelings are settled, meditation can proceed spontaneously and beneficially. Many meditators do not experience satisfying results because they either do not know how to meditate correctly or, if they know how, they do not practice correctly.

When you meditate, do so with intention and purpose. It is your opportunity to fulfill your heart's desire to experience God and understand your relationship to the universe. Don't just sit passively, allowing your attention to be dominated by moods and transitory mental images. By meditating with intention you will not only experience soul-elevating results, you will also be more intentional in everything else you do. Likewise, if you are consciously on purpose with your life in relationship to your chosen outer activities, your attitude will carry over to your metaphysical studies and meditation practice. Train yourself to do everything with clear, conscious intention, instead of allowing your thoughts, moods and actions to be undisciplined and undirected. You are in this world to learn, to grow, and to become proficient. You are here to realize your divine nature and experience God. You are here to put an end to troublesome personal circumstances and to function freely as a conscious, soul liberated being. Therefore, if you are sincere on the spiritual path, remain attentive to all matters important to your continued growth.

Subtle Inner Perceptions
During Meditation Practice

When your breath is so even and quiet that you are no longer aware of it, when your thought processes are so refined that they no longer represent an interference to concentration, you will experience deep meditative calm and may perceive subtle inner sound and light. The subtle sound perceptions are of prana frequencies, as prana ascends the spinal pathway into the brain. The light perceptions are also manifested as a result of ascending prana, as well as the mental processes having been somewhat cleared. Listen to these inner sounds, using them as a mantra to take your attention more inward. Observe the light perceptions as they manifest and by steady gazing learn to maintain them before your inner vision.

Electrical activity in the brain is responsible for initial light perceptions. As mental waves settle, you may perceive clear, white light, like a shining full moon, at the spiritual eye. This is the light

that is always shining behind the darkness of your mind. It is always there but is not always easily perceived. Let your awareness melt in the light. Feel yourself to be that light. Know that behind that light is the field of pure consciousness.

If you do not hear subtle sounds or perceive inner light during your early meditation episodes, do not despair. Rather, enjoy the deep, meditative calm and the experience of absolute beingness. In time, usually when you are not actively trying to hear sound or see light, sound and light will manifest. When it does, just remain calm and observe it. Your innate intelligence may then direct the meditation process, enabling you to experience what is most appropriate for that occasion.

Usually, it is when sitting for longer durations that inner perceptions unfold. This is because it takes time for the body to relax and for mental and emotional surges to become stilled. There are further specific meditation techniques you can use to perceive and work with inner sound and light and these will be explained in the Lesson Guides which follow. The important thing is to work at your level of proficiency and remain open to discovery as your consciousness becomes more clear and your powers of perception improve.

Remember, too, because you are working within yourself at subtle levels, it is best not to discuss your meditation practices, or your experiences and perceptions in a casual way with others. We cannot be overly external and at the same time cultivate internal growth. Where your heart is, there will be your attention. Where your attention is, there will be your experience.

Anytime you are in the need of inspiration and motivation, read these Lessons or any other useful materials. Also, pray to God until you feel an inner response. Pray for guidance, pray for courage to be steady on the path, pray for the resolve to be disciplined and successful in your ventures.

Personal Comprehension Review

Use this review opportunity to improve your understanding of the Lesson material and facilitate your practice.

1. What does the term "avatar"signify?

2. What is a characteristic of a saint?

3. Who is the supreme guru, and why?

4. What are some of the purposes of an illumined spiritual master?

5. Why do we say that food is consciousness?

6. What cosmic influences manifest which of the six food tastes?

7. What is *pranayama*?

8. What are the influences of the solar and lunar breaths?

The Serenity of Holy Remembrance

Our earth life, with its relative beginning and endings, its many changes and sometimes challenges, is but a segment, a very small part, of our larger experience in eternity, the field of endless time. Just as we relate to youth, adulthood and aging during one incarnation, so we move through stages of growth which occur outside of the boundaries of time and physical circumstances in our continuing inward journey to final awakening and restoration in God. In our quiet moments, when reason and intuition are unencumbered by restless thoughts, emotional states and perceptions of externals, we have more than an obscure perception of what is really true for us and about all others with whom we share a common destiny. We know then that we are spiritual beings playing diverse surface roles, while, in truth, grounded in an infinite Something which is not contained by the appearances which come and go on the surface of manifest life.

As our physical birth and our many other unconscious involvements during the course of human experience are but a forgetting of higher realities, so our awakening to higher understanding is but a remembering of what has always been, is now, and forever will be. We are grounded in infinite Consciousness, we are grounded in God, and our seeming individual lives are but extensions of God's life. When we are forgetful of this, when we are involved in relationships and circumstances which seem to be important—and which sometimes are—our awareness of what is ultimately true is obscured and we feel ourselves to be alone, without a firm basis from which to view the world and plan our future behavior. It is at such times that we can feel despair, be uncertain, and perhaps experience a rush of similar past feelings becoming more dominant in our mind and consciousness.

When this happens, we may, with frantic endeavor or calm, seemingly rational judgment, become even more involved in outer relationships and activities in order to experience some meaning in life. We may accomplish this in some measure, for what we may need

to do at such times is to enter into an accepting relationship with life's processes. If increasing soul awareness accompanies our involvements, they can be a means to psychological and spiritual growth. If, on the other hand, soul awareness is clouded by our anxious concerns and sensory experiences, we may succeed in some measure to create for ourselves a semblance (an assumed or unreal appearance; a mere show) of being fulfilled, but it will only be a hollow created drama, devoid of meaning and almost entirely useless for both relative and higher purposes.

That which is *holy* is acknowledged as divine or sacred. God is holy and constant remembrance of God is the certain practice which assures soul serenity. Because we are reflected lights of God, with origins in God, our cultivation of holy remembrance is the assured way to restoring our awareness in God. It is not that we are separated from our source, from God, it is only that we have forgotten. Restoring the soul's attention to God is the emphasis of true religious endeavor. The process is *yoga*, a yoking or connecting of attention with God. When attention is connected with unregulated mental processes, emotional states, and externals, inner awareness of subjective realities is almost entirely absent. This is why, for the aspiring soul, holy remembrance is necessary. Faithfully cultivated and lovingly nurtured, holy remembrance provides an anchor in the shifting tides of life and increasingly empowers the soul with God's omnipotence, God's omniscience and God's omnipresence.

All of the daily practical things we do to harmonize our lives with Nature's rhythms and divine impulses, are helpful. Our positive thoughts, wholesome mental attitudes, health-regulating routines, good works, metaphysical studies and surrendered contemplative meditation are helpful. But most of the otherwise constructive things we do, without remembrance of God are somewhat token efforts and can be only marginally productive. Witness the many sincere truth seekers who are honestly doing the best they know to do, who admit to being dissatisfied with their spiritual growth. With all of their good intentions and self-regulated behaviors, something is obviously wrong. That something is their self-view as being separate from God. Holy remembrance corrects this situation, for it restores the soul's attention to its origins, to the field of God.

It is not only during interludes of prayer and meditation that we are to contemplate our relationship with God. It is not only when we

are stressed and challenged that we are to contemplate this relationship. Remembrance of our divine origins and our relationship with God should be constant, regardless of what we are doing and the press of circumstances. Such holy remembrance will purify the mind, unveil intelligence, awaken intuition, cause the emotional nature to be serene, strengthen the body's immune system, awaken spiritual forces, contribute to improved relationships, provide insight into life's processes and ultimately reveal the meaning of life and the ways of God.

With all of our outer relationships and involvements which occur because of our sojourn in this world, we should remind ourselves that they are temporary and only our relationship with God is permanent. Even the relatively meaningful relationships we have cannot provide us the security we have in knowledge of God and our awareness of the reality of God. Our present incarnation is only of small proportion compared with the much larger field of expression we live in when we are God conscious. The present incarnation has to be well lived, of course, but in context with our more complete destiny.

When we look at planetary circumstances, bounded by our limited perceptions, we may at times forget the more cosmic dimensions of life: that our sun is but one of billions in the galaxy, our galaxy is one of perhaps billions in space, and that our three-dimensional world is but our limited perception of a multi-dimensional universal manifestation expressing in cosmic mind. Our minds, too, are small portions of God's mind and everything occurring in the universe can be reflected in our minds.

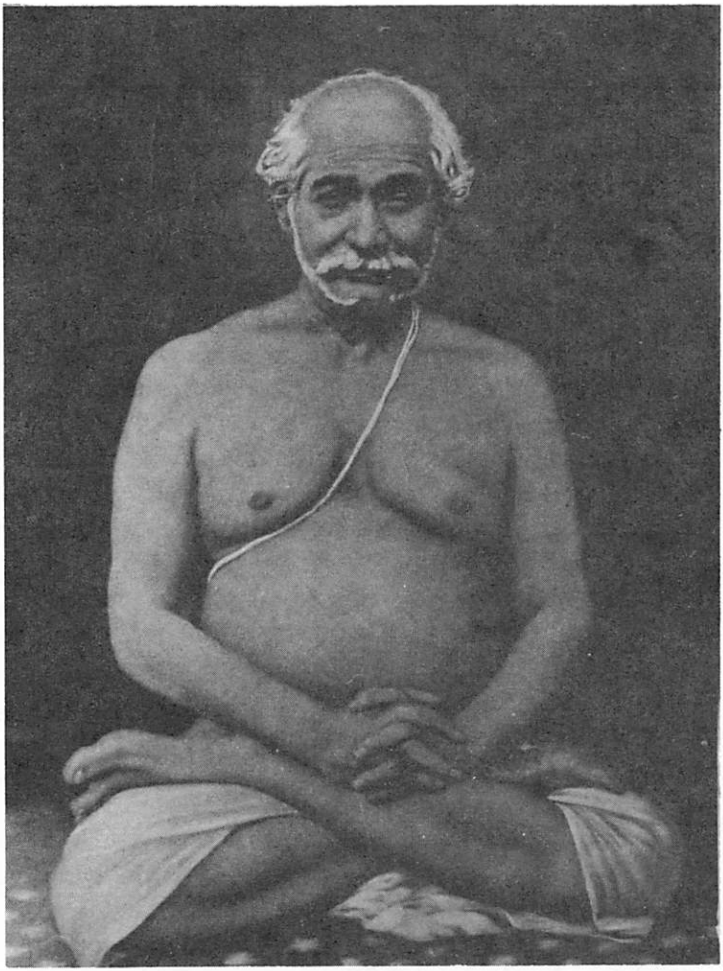
When overly involved with personal daily matters we can lose sight of the fact that we are citizens of eternity, here to manage our affairs with appropriate excellence while, at the same time, contribute to the wellness of society and the planet and attend to continuing personal growth and spiritual awareness. Just as the universe is manifested to serve God's will, the divine intention for which it was expressed, so we are here to serve God's will. We are here to cooperate with evolutional forces and to awaken from the temporary dream of mortality. And life is dream-like for many people. But unlike the dream world experienced during sleep, which is a mental world of fancy rather than of objective reality, the mortal dream experience is one of illusory objective perceptions with little or no awareness of subjective spiritual reality.

The average person's awareness shifts between unconscious, subconscious and self-conscious states, seldom extending to superconscious awareness and beyond to God consciousness. The average person's sphere of reality, then, is limited, restricted by habit and a narrow sense of what is possible. Holy remembrance changes our perceptions of reality, from conditioned ways of looking at and experiencing life to unconditioned ways of perceiving and experiencing. Holy remembrance literally causes psychological transformation and impels spiritual growth.

Holy remembrance requires no organized affiliation, no immediate change in outer circumstances, and no preliminary preparation of any kind. It requires only that we think of our relationship with God and desire to more fully know it. As we do this, all other necessary adjustments naturally follow, for we cannot become increasingly God conscious and continue in nonuseful habitual ways at the same time. We need not confuse the process by worrying about whether or not we are worthy of engaging in it or whether or not it will be ultimately useful. All we need to do is to do it with a surrendered heart. Our heart is the beingness of us, our essential reality. From our heart, from our beingness, we desire to have awareness restored to God consciousness. This is the basis of our religious impulse, the innate urge which, if allowed uninterrupted influence, will allow us to unfold capacities and express all we are capable of expressing.

There has never been a real division between subjective reality and objective appearances, between the spiritual realm and the realm of matter. From the field of God through to material manifestation, life is one continuing expression of divine intention. In the beginning, when we are newly involved on a spiritual growth path, this may be assumed, even believed, but not clearly known. But as our awareness expands and our perceptions become more accurate, we increasingly see that everything in manifestation is indeed an expression of the one Being, Life, Power and Substance we refer to as God.

You are God's personalized expression in spacetime. Your body is formed of the elements of Nature, of God's cosmic forces and material ingredients. Your mind is a portion of God's mind. Your aspiration is God's urge to awaken. Your knowledge is God's perfect knowing. Your intuition is God's infallible perception. God is already expressing as you. Holy remembrance enables you to realize this.



Sri Shyama Charan Lahiri (Lahiri Mahasaya)

Disciple of Mahavatar Babaji and guru of Sri Yukteswar. This print is made from the only known photograph of Lahiri Mahasaya taken during his later years. *Mahasaya* is actually a title bestowed by his disciples and means "large minded" or one who is cosmic conscious.

This Very Moment is Our Opportunity

The Importance of Making the Right Choice

We have a destiny in God. We may ignore it or try to avoid it, but sooner or later God-in-us will prevail. We may claim to be too busy to give even a little of our attention to the process of God-realization. We may even feel that we are not yet ready to come to terms with the reality of God in our lives. These are petty attitudes which sooner or later will have to be discarded.

This very moment, as we are thinking about our present opportunity, is the time to make the right choice and put an end to indecision and the mental and emotional discontent which goes along with it. We only have to choose once. We only have to turn to God once. After that, everything improves and the inner journey to soul fulfillment proceeds.

God's grace is ever available to us but never so much as when we are open and responsive to it. The benevolent Presence is saying, "I am here, allow Me to take charge of your life. Allow Me to fulfill your heart's desire to grow in understanding and know lasting peace."

Say aloud, "I choose a surrendered relationship with God today."

– Roy Eugene Davis

CENTER FOR SPIRITUAL AWARENESS
STUDIES IN TRUTH LESSON GUIDE
MASTER COURSE NUMBER FIVE

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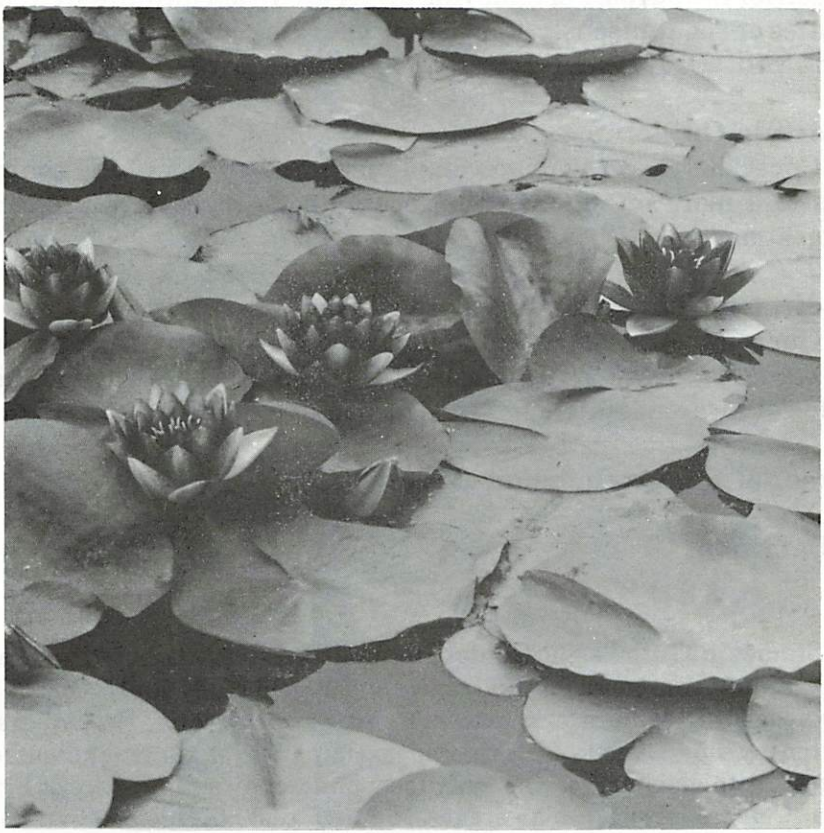
The Call to Discipleship

THE SOUL'S INNATE URGE TOWARD TRANSCENDENCE



It isn't always necessary to think of God with form. It depends on a person's nature. Some people find more devotional inspiration when contemplating the formless reality. Devotion must not be confused with sentiment. Rather, devotion is the sincere aspiration of the heart toward infinite truth.

PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA

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Discipleship implies disciplined thinking and behavior, either chosen for the purpose of removing awareness from unwanted circumstances or spontaneously occurring because of complete dedication to God's will. Discipleship results in spiritual growth.

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Our consciousness descends into involvement with matter through the spinal pathway. We can ascend through this pathway to higher states of awareness and soul-realization.

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Studies in Truth Lesson Guides are published and distributed by Center for Spiritual Awareness for private use and guided study supervised by acknowledged CSA ministers, teachers and group leaders. Prepared and written by Roy Eugene Davis as an examination of the enlightenment process, with emphasis on the traditions, philosophy and practice of Kriya Yoga. Center for Spiritual Awareness, Post Office Box 7, Lake Rabun Road, Lakemont, Georgia 30552 (U.S.A.) In West Africa: Center for Spiritual Awareness, Post Office Box 507, Accra, Ghana.

If you continue in my word, then are you my disciples indeed; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO SAINT JOHN 8: 31,32

Lord, I want to be more holy in my mind. My thoughts tend ever to be divisive and scattered. In so many ways, my mind is a house divided; and the conflicts rage up and down the corridors. I need wholeness. O that my mind may be stilled by thy holy hush! Lord, I want to be more holy in my mind. *HOWARD THURMAN (1899-1981)*

Meditations of the Heart

The Call to Discipleship

THE SOUL'S INNATE URGE TOWARD TRANSCENDENCE

The soul-felt desire to every soul is to have awareness returned to the original state, to the conscious experience of transcendence. It is not that we want to take leave of this world; rather, we inwardly yearn to be unencumbered by the complications which attend incomplete understanding, to be established in soul peace and to never more have to know the feeling of desolation which accompanies the sense of being separated from our source.

If we have even a little metaphysical insight, we know that we have never been separated from our source except in our misunderstanding. This is good to know, and to remember, but the intellectual knowing of it does not always satisfy the heart. Only experience will satisfy us in our soul. Every person, being a reflected ray of God's light, has an innate urge to experience transcendent states of consciousness. This is not merely a reaction to oppressive conditions which might prevail, or to having grown weary of this-world relationships. It is because at the level of being, the heart of us, we intuitively know our origins in the field of pure consciousness and we yearn to once again be established there. It was mentioned in an earlier Lesson that the aim of religious endeavor, as with any Yoga, is to restore the soul's awareness to a conscious relationship with God. I emphasize *restore*, because that is exactly what our awakening to higher knowledge is—a returning of soul attention to the original condition. When we are strongly impelled to this ideal circumstance,

when our yearning is intense enough to cause us to respond in the affirmative in sufficient measure to assist ourselves to spiritual growth, we may be sure that we are heeding the inner call of God to leave behind our egocentric interests and surrender to the higher will. We may be sure that we are called to discipleship.

To be a disciple means to accept the necessity of discipline. It is obvious to us, when we are self-honest about present circumstances, that if we are to unfold our inborn capacities and express our divine potential, there is need for focusing our attention on new priorities. The things we have been doing which have not contributed to psychological and spiritual growth must be renounced in favor of behaviors which are supportive of our higher aspirations. To let go of the lower, in order to possess the higher, is a conscious choice we make when we submit to the path of discipleship.

The conditioned mind, fearful of change and unsure of future involvements and outcomes of choices, may assert, "But I don't want to be anyone's disciple. I don't want to submit my will to another." When we are truly on the discipleship path, whose disciple are we? Well, who's life is ours? That is the question to ask. Our life is God's life, because God is expressing as us at the soul level. Cannot we, then, surrender our minds to God, to our own Higher Self? If we are anyone's disciple, we are God's disciple. Let this be very clear. Let this be understood. Our entire relationship on the spiritual path is with God, our cosmic True Self.

This does not mean that we may not have relative relationships, that we may not have personal interaction with a teaching tradition, a teacher, a mentor, a guru. In all likelihood, we will, for it is rare that a devotee walks the path alone, without wise counsel and encouragement from another. But it is to God we should turn for guidance. It is to God we should pray, that our understanding might be opened and our needs might be met in ways most appropriate. If our primary relationship is not with God, the human tendency may be to seek a more convenient relationship and to search for a more accessible connection. If our heart is pure and our discernment is keen, we may be led in this way to establish a relationship which is truly useful to learning. If we are sincere but our discernment is not flawless, our best attempts to find a teacher may also result in a relationship which is not of great value. So, it is best for us, when we feel called to discipleship, to prepare ourselves for it; then be open to discovery

and let ourselves be guided into relationships which are most supportive of our aspirations.

Should a guru disciple relationship occur, it is a great blessing. The word *guru* (*gu*, "darkness" and *ru*, "light") literally describes the light of knowledge which removes our delusions. God's light removes our delusions by dispelling darkness and confusion from mind and consciousness. The embodied guru is the teacher, the spiritual friend, the mentor, who wants nothing from us but our own response to the invitation to awaken from the dream of mortality that we might be restored to freedom in God.

I was fortunate in that I met my guru when I was eighteen years of age. He said to me, "Stay in tune with me. When you do, I can help you more easily. When your mind is restless and not in tune with my mind, mental static results and that makes it more difficult for me to help you." He also said, to disciples, "If you will allow me, I will reveal God to you." When a disciple would resist being disciplined, fearful of having to relinquish his free will, Paramahansaji would say, "I don't want weak people around me. I want you to be as strong as I am. But to be strong, you have to learn to control your desires and live in the right way. That is why I discipline you, to show you the right way so you can be free."

In the yogic tradition a guru, in the sense of being a teacher, may teach scriptures, routines and general how-to-live procedures. But in the sense of being the agent through which divine influences contribute to the spiritual awakening of the disciple, the enlightened teacher is referred to as a *Satguru*, a "Truth revealer." Only a God conscious guru can share his consciousness and inner force with a disciple, in ways necessary to awaken the disciple and assist him to knowledge and experience of God.

A guru can be male or female, married or single, and can play any role in society or on the world scene. All that is required is that the guru be qualified to do what is required, whether to teach about relative matters only, or to teach such matters as well as assist a disciple on the spiritual path. A Satguru has no dependency needs, for inner knowledge and soul freedom is firmly established; therefore, such a one can work selflessly on behalf of the disciple. Needing nothing for himself, the Satguru, because of compassion and inner direction, serves the cause of evolution by showing willing disciples the way to perfect knowledge and soul liberation.

Preparation for discipleship includes doing those things we know to do which contribute to total wellness and improve our capacity to study, practice and learn. Three requirements are: decision, commitment, and practice. Our decision comes first, of course. After deciding, total commitment is necessary. Not half-way commitment, not an attitude of "I'll try it and see what happens," but commitment that results in complete surrender to the path. With such commitment, practice is easier. With practice, experience follows, resulting in knowledge.

Requirements for Progress on the Discipleship Path

When we are prepared for discipleship our spiritual education can proceed and the transmission of grace can occur. The following qualifications are recommended for a sincere student desirous of discipleship:

1. *Reasonable Intelligence* – Without ability to discern, the remaining qualifications cannot be met. Even persons whose way is that of devotion to God must have a reasonable degree of intelligence to observe their inner changes and understand subtle superconscious states which will unfold. The exercise of intelligence, the power of discriminative determination, enables a devotee to at least partially recognize the fact that relative appearances are transitory. The logical conclusion is that there must be something which is their cause and support, which is changeless and permanent.

2. *Renunciation* – As a result of such discernment, the devotee is able to understand that nothing of the relative spheres can long endure; that permanent happiness cannot be grounded in them. He is then better able to relate to the world without attachment to things or relationships. Even actions judged to be good, such as charitable works, philosophical study, performance of duty, even religious ritual, while performed from human consciousness, are finite, as are their effects if not experienced for higher ends. Since enlightenment is the result of right endeavor and not the effect of any mundane cause, it is only indirectly related to relationships and behaviors. Righteous relationships and appropriate behaviors contribute to mental and emotional poise and harmony with one's environment, thus removing possible barriers to clear perception and focused

spiritual practice. Human satisfaction is often the direct result of our actions: God-realization is more likely when actions have ceased. Since we cannot renounce necessary actions, those which are essential to our well-being and the performance of necessary duties, we can at least learn to live in this world and "be not of it" while fulfilling our obligations. In this way we can be settled in renunciation.

3. *An Ethical Foundation* – The following "six treasures" form the basis of righteous living. Their practice prepares inner faculties for the cultivation of higher knowledge and Self-realization. 1) *Calmness*, as a result of trusting in God. By having faith in the teaching and trusting in God, one can learn to abide in mental and emotional calm regardless of changing circumstances. 2) *Self-control*, necessary for regulating thoughts, feelings, sensory impulses, and behavior. While these are spontaneously regulated when superconsciousness is influential, until these influences are dominant the devotee is advised to be self-disciplined by exercising self-control. 3) As a result of calmness and self-control, the devotee becomes *settled in the Self*, in soul awareness, to the degree that inclinations to remain calm and in control are easy or effortless. 4) Thus inwardly settled, the devotee is able to *endure changing conditions* with perfect detachment. Because of this, his mind is not agitated and he remains purposeful in his commitment to experience enlightenment. 5) *Perfect concentration* is now possible, for the purpose of achieving worthy goals and for success in meditation practice. 6) *Constant yearning* to know God and to experience soul freedom should prevail until one is fully supported by superconscious perceptions and God's grace. Until then, the devotee should remain surrendered in God and let the yearning of his heart inspire him to devotion and disciplined practice.

Hearing, reflection and *meditation* are the three disciplines for the fully prepared disciple. Upon hearing words of truth the disciple should retain them in memory and reflect upon their meaning. Instruction can proceed by reading from valid sources. All instruction should be carefully reflected upon until knowledge is unfolded. The devotee should meditate to clear the mind of distractions, experience superconscious states and awaken to God-realization.

Discipleship in the 21st Century

Discipleship today is no different than it has been in the past, and it will be no different in the future than it is today. Truth does not change and the way to God-realization does not change. The way as taught here is the eternal way of righteousness and is the inner way regardless of one's outer circumstances. With or without an affiliation with an organized enlightenment tradition or religious movement, the path of discipleship is a soul to God relationship. If a guru disciple relationship exists, it also is removed from traditional or sectarian constraints even though outer forms may be observed.

One of the first practical steps to be taken by a disciple on the spiritual path is to immediately make necessary choices to provide a total lifestyle which is supportive of basic aims in life and with spiritual growth. By eliminating distractions, by providing the necessities for comfort and expression, by focusing on important matters, by selflessly serving others and the cause of evolution, one can be sure of doing God's will; that is, be in harmony with evolutional forces. By not choosing and maintaining a supportive lifestyle, problems are allowed to persist, making psychological and spiritual growth more difficult to experience.

Our inner perceptions should be revealed in useful changes in outlook, mental states, general improvement in all areas of our lives, and conscious, purposeful living. We cannot be said to be progressing on the awakening path if our knowledge is not sufficient to allow useful changes in our day-to-day life experiences. We may have a degree of inner comprehension, but the proof of our realization is our ability to actualize our understanding. We may experience dramatic changes in ability to function or it may require time for us to learn how to deepen our understanding and come to terms with our world. The only way to learn is by doing, by furthering our spiritual education, by experiencing a more intimate perception of life processes, and by willingly participating in recommended procedures in order to test our knowledge and acquire proficiency.

Discipleship has responsibilities. The more we know, the greater our capacities are, the more life will express through us in constructive ways, when we learn to let it. The needs of people (and the planet) are greater today than ever before in the known history of man. While perhaps half of the global population is still living in rural

areas, the rest are in industrialized societies. Over 6 billion human beings now live on Planet Earth, with perhaps a quarter of a million being added every day. The pace of living is more rapid, information is more available, millions of people are overstressed and are experiencing the resulting traumatic effects of stress, the environment needs to be cleaned up, resources need to be more prudently used and recycled, hundreds of millions of people need to be spiritually educated, and millions are seeking God-realization. This is not the era in which to be complacent, or well-intentioned but passive. This is an era in which to be anchored in divine awareness while selflessly contributing to the needs of people, all creatures, and the planet itself.

Once your path is known, be faithful to it. If it is your path of destiny it will take you quickly and surely to your goal of fulfillment in God. Honor all legitimate enlightenment traditions but do not mix practices or philosophical views. If you can see through outer differences to the essence of all enlightenment traditions, so much the better. Otherwise, to mix studies and disciplines is a form of adultery. When a pure substance is adulterated, it is mixed with other substances until it is no longer pure. You will know when you are on the right course in life because you will be mentally clear, emotionally balanced, steady in your meditation practices, insightful when reading scripture, satisfied with your relationships and activities, and steadily awakening to higher knowledge. When you are uncertain, confused, emotionally unstable, seldom able to know peace of mind and soul, you then know that your behaviors need to be changed. We have conscience and commonsense, along with intelligence, and usually it does not require superior realization to know how to proceed.

Because it does not require superior realization to have enough sense, and willingness, to do what is best, we should not wait until we are more spiritually advanced before living as fully as possible a righteous life. We can, in the beginning, do what is recommended as duty, until it becomes our natural behavior. Even when our intention to perform wisely meets with inner resistance, by an act of surrender to duty we will be able to do the right thing. After all, discipline of the mind, senses and emotions is basic to discipleship.

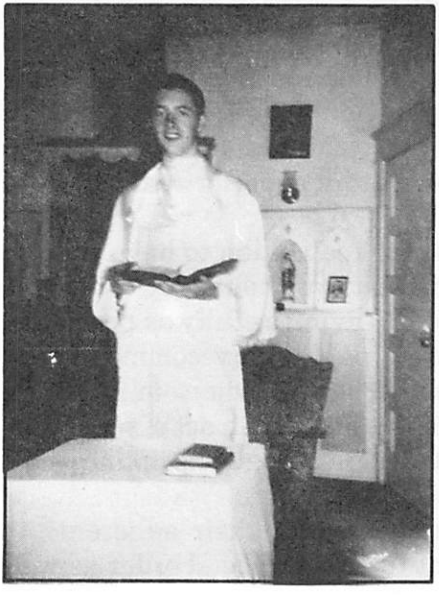
All religious traditions have guidelines for their adherents to observe. Some guidelines are meant to provide social order as well

as psychological wellness. Others are necessary to enable devotees to pursue the inner way. In the *Yoga Sutras* the ten preliminary rules for adjusting behavior and regulating states of consciousness are: harmlessness, truthfulness, honesty, regulation and transmutation of vital forces, renunciation, purity in all ways, contentment in all circumstances, self-discipline, study of the nature of consciousness, and surrender to God. We will examine these in more detail in a future Lesson.

As a general guideline, let all of your thoughts, emotional states, actions and the results of actions, be constructive. In this way you will not have to worry about whether or not you are living righteously. To be a good person is an excellent foundation upon which to proceed to emotional maturity and spiritual growth.

If you feel called to discipleship but are reluctant to make a commitment on the path, or your way is not yet clear, pray about it. Pray to God in the way that satisfies your heart and say, "Lord, I want to be holy in my mind. I want to be surrendered to Your will." God will respond to your earnest prayer and you will be strengthened, enthused, and led of the Spirit.

If you are already committed to discipleship, pray for continued resolve and remain steady on the path. Yours is the path of light, the path of revelation and spiritual fulfillment.



At age 22 when I was the minister of the Self-Realization Fellowship church in Phoenix, Arizona. Snapshot taken March, 1952, shortly after the passing of Paramahansaji. This chapel was also used for my private meditations, during which many early cosmic perceptions unfolded.

Paramahansaji personally dedicated this facility a few years earlier, having made a special trip from California to do so.

One whose governing principle influences are in balance, whose appetite is good, whose tissues are functioning normally, whose nutrient processes are in balance, and whose physiology, mind and senses are always full of bliss is called a healthy person.

SUSHRUTA SAMHITA

I already possess all that is granted to me in eternity. For God in the fullness of his Godhead dwells eternally in his image—the soul.

MEISTER ECKHART (1260-1327)

Lifestyle Guidelines
LIVING IN HARMONY WITH THE RHYTHMS OF NATURE

The most practical way to select foods is to follow your instinct and eat what your body "tells you" it wants. When the body is cleansed of toxic matter, when life is well ordered, when inner peace is constant, you will be naturally inclined to choose foods which are most useful to physical and emotional wellness. When healthy, and when psychological cravings are absent, intelligence will be the determining factor.

Foods should be selected for freshness. Processed foods are usually best avoided. Radiated foods are suspect, and liquids, such as milk and juices, should be in opaque glass containers, not in clear glass or plastic. Light can destroy vitamins in liquids, and plastics may infuse their chemical influences into food.

Iron or steel pots should be used for cooking, not aluminum. Everything used in the preparation of food should be clean, including counter tops, cutting boards, and cutting and mixing utensils. Vegetables and fruits should be washed and unused nuts and grains kept in sealed containers. Microwave ovens are not recommended.

Some foods can be eaten raw and some foods are more useful to the body when cooked to break down the cell structure. Vegetable cells are destroyed by heat, exposing cooked foods to the oxidation process. For this reason, cooked foods should be eaten as soon as they are prepared and not stored for later use. Another advantage of cooking some foods is that when they are cooked, they become more concentrated because of reduction in volume. The ideal, in most

instances, is not to overcook vegetables.

There may be occasions when a mild body cleansing routine is desired. Fasting is not recommended for all constitutional types. Air constitution persons should be wary of fasting because it increases the Air principle, often causing a "spacy"feeling. Fire constitutional types can fast comfortably for but a few days, at most. This is because fasting increases the Fire governing principle of the body, which tends to aggravate the already strong Fire influence. Water constitutional types can usually fast more comfortably than the other two types.

An easier way to encourage the cleansing of waste matters from the body is to simply ingest only cleansing foods, such as vegetables and fruits. Nuts, beans and dairy products can be avoided at this time. Eat fiber rich foods to encourage intestinal action and regular elimination of fecal matter. Bathe daily while on a cleansing diet, and practice Hatha Yoga or take long walks. Meditate regularly and feel your innate life force becoming more pronounced in influence.

The morning meal can be fresh fruit. Fruits are cleansers and provide nutrients in easily assimilated form. They are quickly digested and pass through the body easily.

The noon meal can be a fresh garden salad, with perhaps a light dressing of olive oil and fresh lemon or lime juice. If more substantial food is desired, a small portion of cooked brown or basmati rice can be added. Chopped onion could be used as a garnish.

The early evening meal could include another small garden salad and a serving of brown rice or baked potato. Sauteed onion and garlic could be used to add interest, as well as provide their cleansing influences.

After several days the body will feel light and clean, the eyes will be bright, the tongue clean and pink, the stool will be odorless and float in water. An increase in energy and mental alertness will be experienced. Meditation will be easy and enjoyable.

Everything in nature is built up of atomic particles—we live in an electric universe. Vital force is present in natural foods and released into the body when foods are consumed. Fruits attack and break up toxic conditions. Some vegetables, such as potatoes, attract toxic wastes and carry them from the body. This is why, in this regimen, fruits are taken in the morning and vegetables later in the day.

After a sense of balance and well-being has been restored, one can

then begin to include other preferred items in the diet, doing so gradually until the food program is once again established to suit personal preference and needs.

Selecting and eating foods in proper kind, combination and measure, can ensure sound nutrition, ideal body weight, abundant energy and, quite possibly, longer life. Live foods, plus prana taken in through breathing, provide the life forces utilized to maintain proper balance of the body's governing principles. By not overeating, the body conserves energy which can be used for more creative purposes.

Systematic undereating is believed to contribute to longevity. The purpose of undereating is to provide the body with necessary nourishment but to avoid overloading it with food wastes. Unrestricted food intake may be linked to a variety of ailments, such as kidney and heart disease, cataracts and some cancers. The plan should be to eat only when hungry and then only what is necessary.

Some foods act as cleansers, some as builders, and some as vitalizers. They can be chosen according to inclination and need. Fruits have a cleansing influence, as do vegetables that grow above the ground, though the latter are also sustaining foods. Fruits that grow high above the ground have more solar influence. Underground vegetables are also sustaining foods. These include potatoes, carrots, beets, turnips, and others. Onions, garlic and ginger are vitalizing foods, and are especially good for men. They are powerful cleansers and aid in the removal of toxins and the elimination of harmful bacteria.

Nuts can be a useful addition to the diet but, being a concentrated food, need not be taken in large quantities. A dozen almonds, for instance, is usually a sufficient portion. Peanuts, a legume, and soybeans are often hard to digest. Undigested proteins, since they are not stored by the body, can result in waste residue which needs to be cleansed from the system.

In Ayurvedic texts the following drink is recommended for men, to help maintain reproductive health and function: Soak six to ten almonds overnight in milk. Remove the skins. Blend with a teaspoon of honey and the crushed seeds of three or four cardamom pods. Drink at room temperature, or warm. Also recommended are pistachio nuts, garlic, onions and ginger, to naturally energize the body.

The foods recommended for each constitutional type are those

which will not increase the governing principle influences for that type. If one has a mixed constitutional type, foods could be selected from each chart in the approximate corresponding percentages.

Vegetables and grains should constitute the basic dietary plans. When grains are taken at the same meal with legumes, the amino acids from these foods tend to provide a balance of protein requirements.

Fruit juices, being the concentrated essence of fruit, can be diluted with half water. Apple juice is good for Water constitutional types because it decreases Water influences and increases Air. Grape juice is good for Fire and Air types because it decreases these influences and increases Water governing principle influences.

When using recipes, simply substitute foods which are desired for personal use, when possible. Food selection, preparation and eating, are sacred rites because the body temple is being nourished and the indwelling spirit honored. Bear this in mind when preparing food for yourself and when offering it to family members and guests. When eating, be self-reminded of the goodness of the universe and let your heart express gratitude.

Nutritious, vegetarian meals are served in a relaxed environment during all retreat programs at CSA headquarters.

That yogi who has controlled his mental impulses and known this place (the crown chakra, related to transcendental awareness) is never again born by karmic compulsion. His mind controlled and his aim achieved, he possesses complete power to do what he wishes and to prevent which he does not wish. He ever moves toward complete knowledge of God and liberation of consciousness. His speech, whether in prose or verse, is ever pure and sweet.

ANCIENT YOGA TEXT

I was in the spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet. And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks.
THE REVELATION OF SAINT JOHN THE DIVINE 1: 10 & 12

Meditating Through "the Path of God"
THE SEVEN CHAKRAS AND INNER SUBTLE ANATOMY

Chakras are "wheels" or circular vital centers along the spinal pathway through which prana, flowing downward from the brain, is modified into various frequencies and distributed throughout the body.

Soul force enters the physical body at the medulla oblongata, the lowest part of the brain, continuous with the spinal cord. As it flows into the body at this center it divides into positive and negative currents, flows to the higher brain and from there, downward to vitalize the body. Soul awareness then identifies with the body. Paramahansaji referred to the medullary center as "the mouth of God," because the body is fed by cosmic prana entering here.

Spiritually advanced persons are able to so identify with cosmic prana that they can be sustained by it, without having to rely upon nutrients and prana from solid or liquid foods. Mahavatar Babaji does this, as do other mortal-immortals and some saints.

The astral or electric body is formed of prana and its vital forces sustain the physical body. When prana is removed from the body, it is rendered lifeless. Yogis teach that soul force is dynamically breath-conveyed into the flesh with such impact that the soul falsely

perceives itself to actually be the body. When, by pranayama practice, calm detachment and meditation, one is able to experience a more objective view of the relationship between soul and body, clear understanding of this relationship is possible. They further teach that the soul becomes actively identified with the body during early stages of gestation when the brain begins to develop, contributing from that time to its awareness and mental-emotional karmic influences.

The chakras are also vortices of mixed cosmic forces, with potential to express. In spiritually unawakened persons soul forces flow predominantly downward and chakra potentials are for the most part obscured. Life force not used to maintain minimal functions is then dormant in the body in the lower chakras. This "dormant potential" is referred to in yogic literature as *kundalini.* When it awakens spontaneously, soul awareness becomes more pronounced. When it is intentionally aroused by aspiration to know higher reality, by devotion, and by pranayama and other practices, the devotee is able to participate in his own spiritual evolution. Kriya Yoga procedures and techniques facilitate the awakening of kundalini in a natural, gentle way.

Righteous living, cultivation of the moral virtues, psychological maturity, and selfless surrender to God are essential to the cultivation of inner vital resources. So long as one is surrendered to transformative processes, kundalini activity will by its actions result in expanded states of consciousness and a more natural inclination to live an ordered life.

The yogi's aim is to allow the kundalini force to ascend through the chakras and become established in the crown chakra. The crown chakra is the positive polarity and the base chakra is the negative one. Radiations of kundalini manifest as the creative forces which circulate throughout the body through a network of subtle channels different from the nerve network, although at certain places in the body the prana pathways and nerves are in proximity. These connecting points are vital centers which, if damaged, cause severe trauma to the body.

Kundalini can also be aroused by contact with holy places, where energy frequencies are "spiritualized" by prayer, devotional practices and the presence of saints, and by association with others in whom the force is freely flowing. This spontaneous awakening of kundalini

forces is referred to as *shaktipat* ("the transmission of creative force, *shakti*, from its source to a receptive person"). The more influential exterior creative forces quicken the latent creative forces in the devotee, causing them to become active. It was in this way that I received inner quickening as a result of my association and attunement with my guru. It is taught that this transmission can be facilitated by the guru's will (intention), by his touch, by his spoken word, through his eyes, and spontaneously as the result of grace.

Sushumna, the path of God, is the channel through which prana flows are dominant during inward meditation and through which kundalini ascends. When prana flows through the right (solar) and left (lunar) channels it contributes to mood changes, mental transformations and fluctuations between right brain/left brain dominance. Prana flowing through sushumna calms emotions, refines mental processes and contributes to brain hemisphere coherence, or consistency. The disturbing mental, emotional and physical influences being removed from awareness allow intellect to function more accurately and intuition to be freely used. The three spinal channels originate in the base chakra, come together in the second and third chakras, and are more evident in proximity to the higher chakras. The chakras, being receptacles of vital force, have been referred to by some mystics as candlesticks (see *Revelation* 1:12). From the chakras prana frequencies emanate, which can be viewed reflected in the spiritual eye.

States of consciousness are related to the chakras. When soul awareness is predominantly identified with the base chakra, awareness is restricted. When identified with the second chakra, partial awareness of subtle forces in the body is experienced. When identified with the third chakra, improved awareness of mental processes and a sense of self-consciousness is more pronounced. When identified with the fourth chakra, soul awareness begins to be unveiled. When identified with the fifth chakra, ability to comprehend the categories of consciousness and the reality of God improves. When identified with the sixth chakra, the spiritual eye, astral, causal and subtle cosmic perceptions are possible. When identified with the crown chakra, transcendence is possible.

The chakras are sometimes symbolically referred to as lotus blossoms, the petals being the rays of prana frequencies. When life forces flow mostly downward, resulting in soul awareness being

identified with mind and body, the petals are described as being closed and in a downward direction. When currents are ascending, the petals are said to be upright and open. The crown chakra is referred to as the "thousand petaled" lotus because of its myriad rays of prana frequency. It is sometimes related to the higher brain but is more often described as exterior to the brain, representing as it does transcendent states of consciousness. Artists sometimes depict light over the head of saints to indicate illumination of consciousness.

Psychological States and Behavior as Related to the Seven Chakras

Psychological growth must occur along with spiritual growth if balanced unfoldment is to be experienced. The following descriptions are indications of psychological and behavioral patterns as related to the chakras.

Behavior common to the first chakra – Because of insecurity, may be expressed as fearfulness, uncertainty, illusion, delusion, greed, anger when needs are not met and desires are not fulfilled. Young children often display these characteristics because they are learning to adapt to new environments in which circumstances are not yet understood.

Behavior common to the second chakra – Because of awakened sense of perception, may be expressed in attempts to "touch" the environment, to experience and relate to it, as increased sensitivity, sensuality, occasional confusion, fantasy and imagination, role-playing, and pretending to be the hero or heroine of a drama. At this level one's curiosity motivates the exploring of various possibilities.

Behavior common to the third chakra – Because of more pronounced self-identity, egoism, may be expressed as efforts to manifest evidence of personal power, to attain recognition, to understand the laws of causation to accomplish purposes, sometimes as unbounded optimism and the feeling that anything is possible.

Behavior common to the fourth chakra – Because of aspiration to be centered and balanced, may be expressed as changes in lifestyle, a change in one's direction in life, restlessness and uncertainty, a feeling that something important is missing in one's life, the development of conscience, and a sincere desire for soul awareness and inner satisfaction.

Behavior common to the fifth chakra – Because of inner yearning to know the meaning of life, may be expressed as efforts to be more focused because time to acquire knowledge and to learn to be emotionally mature may be running out.

Behavior common to the sixth chakra – Because of the fulfillment of major purposes, emotional maturity and spiritual awareness may be expressed as behavior which is righteous and benevolent, and a desire to share wisdom with others.

Behavior common to the seventh chakra – Because it represents completion, may be expressed as compassionate, selfless participation in assisting individuals, society and Nature in the direction of their highest good.

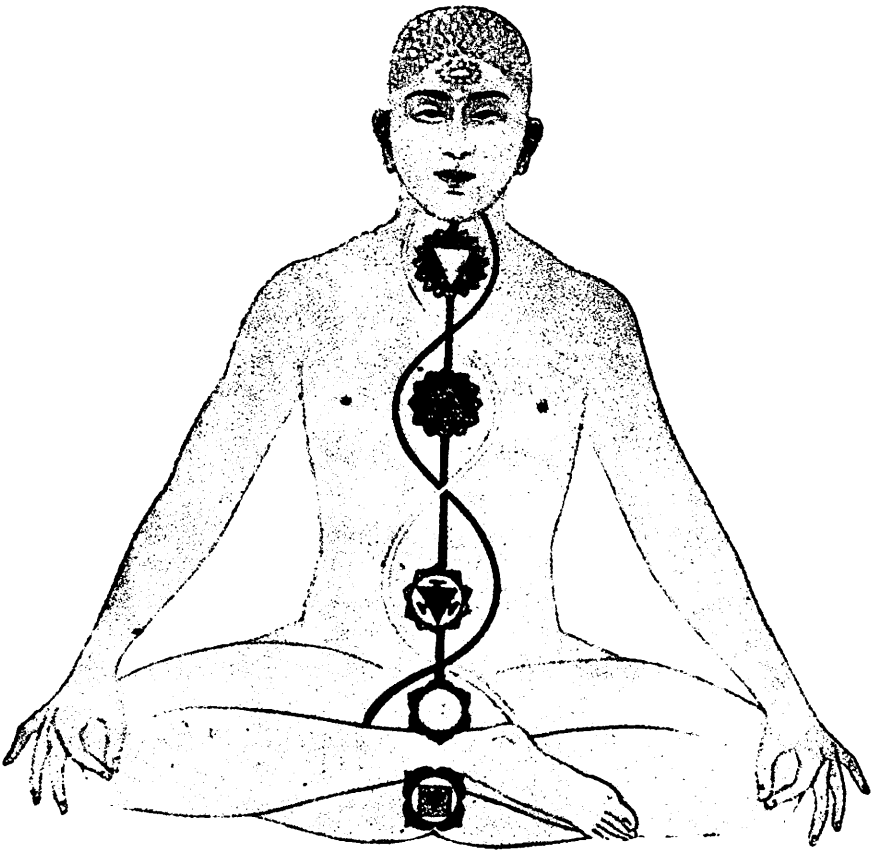
The above characteristics are observed in persons who are not consciously on a spiritual growth path, as well as in those who are. Spiritual growth indications, as related to the chakras, are more obviously in accord with the unfoldment of higher intellectual and intuitive capacities.

Meditating Through "the Path of God"

Use the following technique after you have become internalized and established in meditative calm. Let your awareness be in the spinal pathway while looking into the spiritual eye. Try to *feel* the full length of the spinal column and the interior of the skull cavity. Lean forward from the pelvic area, then backward, and resume your upright posture. Then, bend slightly to the left, back to the center, slightly to the right, and back to the center. Be relaxed and poised. This will result in increased awareness of the spine.

Contract and relax the sphincter muscles of the rectum a few times, then be relaxed. *Feel* the base chakra and while looking into the spiritual eye, mentally chant OM several times, repeat OM, OM, OM, OM, OM, OM fifteen to twenty times, although you need not count the repetitions. Each time you mentally chant, feel that you are piercing through the spiritual eye. See if any colors are perceived and if any subtle sounds are heard in the inner ear.

When inclined, bring your attention and *feeling* up to the second chakra and repeat as before. Do this progressively through the chakras until you reach the spiritual eye. Then sit in the silence,



Old drawing illustrating the location of the vital centers or chakras. The "petals" of the chakras represent various frequencies of prana expressive at each vital place.

without chanting OM, looking into the spiritual eye and listening within, while simultaneously aware at the crown chakra. Sit for a long time in the silence, absorbed in contemplation.

Do not strain when practicing this technique. Just focus your attention and flow into the experience. Meditate in a darkened room so that external light will not filter through your closed eyelids and interfere with inward concentration.

With patient practice you may eventually discern inner lights and sounds, if not while contemplating at the chakras, then afterwards when sitting in the silence. The inner lights will be the prana frequencies emanating from the chakras and reflected in the spiritual eye. The sounds will likewise be those of the prana frequencies of the chakras. This exercise will awaken your astral perception and afford attractive perceptions to engage your attention so that meditation is more enjoyable and revealing. Some characteristics of the chakras are:

Base Chakra – Located between the anus and genitals. The Earth element prana frequency. Sweet in taste, yellow in color and has the sound of restless bees. Material state of consciousness. Sanskrit name *Muladhara* means "foundation." Governs the adrenal glands.

Second Chakra – Located just above the base chakra. The Water element prana frequency. Astringent in taste, white in color and has the sound of the flute. Partial soul awareness. The Sanskrit name *Svadhisthan* means "abode of self." Governs the reproductive glands.

Third Chakra – Located opposite the naval. The Fire element frequency. Bitter in taste, red in color and has the sound of a harp. State of consciousness is egoism. The Sanskrit name *Manipura* means "the city of gems." Governs the pancreas.

Fourth Chakra – Opposite the heart area. The Air element prana frequency. Sour in taste, blue in color and has the sound of the peal of a gong. Soul awareness evidences compassion and preparedness for discipleship. The Sanskrit name *Anahata* means "unstruck sound." Governs the thymus gland.

Fifth Chakra – Opposite the throat. The Ether element prana frequency. Pungent in taste, grey or misty in color with sparkling pinpoints of light and has the sound of thunder or an ocean's roar.

Sixth Chakra – Between the eyebrows. Transcending the mix-

tures of pranas and superior to them. Cosmic forces are seen concentrated here as a dark blue orb with a golden halo, centered by a silver-white light. Gold is the color frequency of OM, blue is the color frequency of Cosmic Intelligence, white represents Spirit. Soul awareness established here results in God-identification. The Sanskrit name *Ajna* means "command" because from this center lower ones can be regulated. Governs the pituitary gland.

Seventh Chakra – The "power station" of the body. Light is that "as of a thousand suns." Soul awareness is pure consciousness. The Sanskrit name *Sahasrara* refers to the "thousand petaled lotus" for the reason mentioned earlier.

Sushumna has a subtle inner channel which, when opened, results in astral perceptions during meditation. Within that subtle channel is a fine pathway which, when opened, results in perception of the causal, or magnetic properties behind the astral field. When the astral channel is open one's meditative perceptions can be dream-like in lower states of consciousness and brilliant, clear vistas when in higher states of consciousness. While it can be interesting to observe these perceptions it is better to rise above them by moving into and through the spiritual eye with intention of experiencing expanded states, knowledge of God and pure consciousness.

Experiences had during deep meditation will tend to influence thinking, feeling and behavior during the remaining hours of the day. There will be occasions of spontaneous insight, evidence of certain guidance, and an increasing awareness of being in tune with cosmic processes. Psychological and spiritual growth will be steadily encouraged as a result of profound, meditative superconscious experiences and perceptions.

Facing Page: Paramahansa Yogananda circa 1949

Personal Comprehension Review

Use this review opportunity to improve your understanding of the Lesson material and facilitate your practice.

1. What is the soul-felt urge of every soul that leads to discipleship?

2. What must a disciple renounce?

3. What is the meaning of the word *guru*?

4. What are the requirements for progress on the spiritual path? Why are these important?

5. What "six treasures" form the basis of righteous living?

6. What are some practical steps to be taken by a new disciple?

7. How can you know you are on the right course in life?

8. Write a basic diet plan for yourself.

9. Describe the chakras and their purposes.

10. What is *kundalini*?

11. What behaviors are essential to the cultivation of inner resources?

12. Describe the three main channels through which prana moves in the spinal pathway.

13. Practice meditating through the path of God.

Reflections

It is my experience, as well as the reported experience of many devotees on the spiritual path, that interludes of contemplative quietude enable the divine intelligence within us to reveal the solutions to all problems and the answers to all clearly presented questions. I can testify that turning to the source, to God, is the most useful way to experience unerring guidance and the resolution of inner or outer circumstances which challenge in any way.

A major problem for many sincere devotees is that they are too outwardly directed and too superficially involved with their thoughts, feelings, relationships and behaviors. Such spiritually immature behavior is evidence of identification with self-sense and personality instead of with soul awareness and God-reality. We need not judge the behavior of others, we need only evaluate our own in order to come to terms with our major purposes in life.

In the first Lesson in this series I recommended that you clearly define your major purposes. I hope you have done this and that your life totally reflects your self-confessed intentions. If so, you are steady on the awakening path. With dedicated resolve, adherence to your chosen path, patience in the face of challenge, and trust in God who determines all outcomes, you are certain to experience complete success in this present life-cycle.

Every day, go deeper in God as you meditate. Let every day find you more God conscious and more surrendered to God's will. Let every day be for you one of fresh discovery. Let every moment be cherished, as behind your thoughts, feelings and actions, awareness of the reality of God steadily increases until God is more real than your personality and you experience yourself as an expressive agent of God's creative impulses.

There may be times when awareness of God is eclipsed by pressing matters, by unexpected intrusions and even by your own

confused thought processes and changing moods. At such times, do not indulge in self-defeating thinking, falsely assuming that God is neglecting you or that you are not progressing on the path. No person in human (conditioned) consciousness is perfect. There is not an enlightened person in the universe who has not experienced what you sometimes experience. Just don't give up. Don't indulge in moods and thoughts of weakness and inadequacy. At the core of your being, as a soul, you are divine. You are perfect just as you are, at this level. It is by letting go of surface conflicts and disturbances that our inner perfection is allowed to emerge and be influential.

It is often easy to know our soul perfection when we are quiet, when the senses are stilled and emotions are settled. It is not always so easy to remain soul-centered when cravings become insistent and emotions are unregulated. But we must do our best and, in this way, master thoughts, senses and emotional states. This is why we practice Kriya Yoga—to learn how to regulate sensory impulses and rid ourselves of all restricting influences.

Until we are firmly grounded in soul awareness, if we are not one hundred percent committed on the path and surrendered to God, we may at times give way to feelings of frustration and despair. "Will I never overcome my lower nature?" we may lament. "Maybe I should try another way," we may think. Confusion may then cloud our reason and pessimism may determine our attitudes and thoughts. Such occasions are spiritual growth opportunities if we recognize them as such. It is often when we are so confronted by our personal weaknesses that we then turn to God. By admitting to ourselves that we, at the personality level, are not as capable as we once believed ourselves to be, we can make life-changing decisions and surrender to redeeming grace.

Paramahansaji repeatedly counseled me to be steady on the path, to be totally committed to God and to never give up. Some people think this to be a radical approach which allows no room for the exercise of personal will—and they are right. Personal choices we may have and with God's grace they will be correct ones, but a devotee on the path should be surrendered only to the will of God as God's will is known and understood. Read any authentic religious scripture, learn of the teachings of any enlightened master, and you will see that the emphasis is the same. If we are called to discipleship, if we are sincerely interested in spiritual growth, nothing less than com-

plete psychological transformation and full God-realization will satisfy the heart.

This means that having chosen a lifestyle which is fully supportive of our highest aspirations and spiritual growth, *we must live it.* The spiritual path is not for self-centered, moody experimentalists. It is for soul-centered, optimistic doers of the word. Hearing about the way to God-realization, thinking about it, dabbling with a variety of systems and methods, being half-hearted and emotionally immature, will not be productive. I have met hundreds of people who have told me that they "were on the path" for decades, with little to show for it. They have admitted that they were not as attentive to their practices as they should have been. They could have done more but they didn't. They could have been saints but they weren't, yet.

Many people have come to me, saying they wanted to be disciples on the path. Some have persisted. Many have fallen away because of having lost interest or because of finding the challenge of having to change too difficult. Commitment to discipleship should be total. It represents a major step from self-conscious living to true spiritual growth. It represents the conscious choice to experience the Infinite and to put behind us the sorrow, confusion and pain characteristic of deluded awareness. The wonders of total knowledge and experience of Reality lie before us to be accepted by our act of commitment on the spiritual path.

No matter what others around you do or do not do, your inner resolve to experience God is your personal choice and has nothing to do with the opinions of others or outer circumstances. This is why discipleship is the secret way—not a way denied to others, but a personal, private relationship with God as we undergo necessary inner changes to experience the fulfillment of soul destiny. Your inner way may not be exactly the same as the inner way of another on the path, because your needs are different and your role in life may be different. One thing is certain: as we remain steady in our resolve, all of our legitimate needs will be met and God will see to it that the role we are meant to play will be revealed.

Because even at advanced levels of spiritual awareness ego-sense and not yet flawless perception can veil understanding, at every step of the way we need to be completely self-honest and surrendered to the possibility of higher revelation. As we progress, the path becomes increasingly subtle. We, therefore, do not want to be tempted to settle

for partial enlightenment, for sainthood or the status of being a God-person. Even a saint may fall from grace as a result of becoming involved with mental processes and the senses, and a partially God-conscious person can still be somewhat influenced by egocentric whims. One may become endowed with (almost) all knowledge and exceptional abilities and still be short of the goal of liberation of consciousness.

There are many guidelines for living recommended by enlightened teachers, but there is an underlying emphasis supporting all of them. It is this: Whatever we do should be done with knowledge of its results. Whatever we do should be done for constructive purposes. In this way, no effort is wasted and no causes are put into motion which can possibly have nonuseful effects. Our lives are then entirely productive. We may at times wonder how it is that some people seem to accomplish so much, in contrast to how little others accomplish. It is not always that productive people do more, only that they are focused and intentional. Their attention is given only to essentials, only to those matters which coincide with their major purposes.

If constructive outcomes are to be actualized, purity of motive must always be present. The results of our efforts cannot be said to be entirely constructive unless our motives are pure and outcomes are entirely beneficial to ourselves, to others and to the environment in which circumstances unfold. Again, the influences of the gunas come into the picture. Sattwa guna, the attribute of truth, of luminosity, should be the prevailing influence in our thoughts, moods and behaviors. Rajas guna, the attribute of action, is necessary for expression but should be dominated by purity of motive, resolve and expression. Tamas guna, the attribute of heaviness, should only be present to the degree that it is necessary for material manifestation. If we are soul-centered, if we are God-aware, if we are selfless yet responsible, it will be natural for purity to prevail.

We are not alone in our endeavors. We are grounded in God and God's expressive life, the Holy Spirit, pervades our consciousness and environment. The flow of God's grace through the gurus and saints is supportive of our every right resolve and action. And whether known or unknown, the well-intentioned, diligent efforts of millions of devotees like ourselves are supportive of our personal aspirations and actions. There is a larger sphere of reality, a higher dimension of life, than is known or imagined by persons who are yet living by

their limited perception of circumstances. Heaven is all around us, but we have to learn to perceive it and accept it.

It is true that we have eternity, endless time, in which to actualize our spiritual potential and fulfill our purposes, but our present incarnation is the one most suitable for doing this. This is because now, while we are presently aware of possibilities and have access to useful knowledge, is the available interlude in time to make right decisions and follow through with right actions.

Every day, pray: "Dear God: I will reason, I will exercise choice, I will act. Please guide my reasoning, choices and actions, to enable me to do the right things I should do."

Note: Review these Lesson Guides on a regular schedule. Make notes and apply the teachings and the procedures until you make them your own by experiencing them. The way here taught is the way of illumined men and women of the ages, the way realized by direct revelation. What others have realized, you can realize. What others have experienced, you can experience. Knowledge is within you. Let it unfold. Divinity is your real nature. Let it express.

In God's Universe
There are Many Dwelling Places

In God's grand universe, from the celestial realms through to material ones, an almost infinite variety of conditions prevail. We experience them according to our states of consciousness, in the degree that we are able to perceive and adapt to them.

What kind of dwelling place are you now experiencing? Is it a lovely place, an environment in which you can be happy and fulfill all of your worthy purposes? Or should you move from where you are to where you want to be, where you should be in the divine plan?

All that is needed is an adjustment in mental attitude and a change in how you see yourself in relationship to your world. If you decide to move, from one level of awareness to another, leave all unnecessary things behind—the attitudes, habits of thinking and behavior—everything you will not need in your new dwelling place. Your inner journey will then be quick and comfortable.

– Roy Eugene Davis

CENTER FOR SPIRITUAL AWARENESS
STUDIES IN TRUTH LESSON GUIDE
MASTER COURSE

NUMBER SIX

92

The Way of Discipleship

HOW TO LIVE SURRENDERED IN GOD

Let every creature have your love. Love with its fruits of meekness, patience, and humility, is all that we can wish for ourselves, and for our fellow creatures; for this is to live in God, united in him for time and eternity.

WILLIAM LAW (1686-1761)
A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life

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To live in harmony with the natural order, while always being open to inner guidance and desiring to know God, is the way of predictable success on the spiritual path. Once called to discipleship we must learn how to be a disciple.

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Grace is the operant spirit of God expressing in Nature and man. While we are to use our natural talents and abilities to help ourselves, grace is ultimately the deciding factor in all worthwhile outcomes.

Cosmic Sound Current Meditation 19

The most direct approach to God-realization and transcendental perceptions is to follow the inner sound current to its source. Here is the specific technique to practice.

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Studies in Truth Lesson Guides are published and distributed by Center for Spiritual Awareness for private use and guided study supervised by acknowledged CSA ministers, teachers and group leaders. Prepared and written by Roy Eugene Davis as an examination of the enlightenment process, with emphasis on the traditions, philosophy and practice of Kriya Yoga. Center for Spiritual Awareness, Post Office Box 7, Lake Rabun Road, Lakemont, Georgia 30552 (U.S.A.) In West Africa: Center for Spiritual Awareness, Post Office Box 507, Accra, Ghana.

When you pray, enter into your prayer chamber, and when you have shut the door, pray to God in the secret recesses of your consciousness; and from this inner place, you shall see the manifestation of outer results.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO SAINT MATTHEW 6:6
paraphrase of the King James Version

And this is the noble truth of the way which leads to the stopping of sorrow. It is the noble eightfold path...right views, right aspirations, right speech, right conduct, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right contemplation.

THE PALI CANON
Scripture of Buddhism

The Way of Discipleship
HOW TO LIVE SURRENDERED IN GOD

The way of discipleship is the way of spiritual freedom; therefore, to be a true disciple one must be willing to learn how to live surrendered in God. Such surrender is not possible without psychological transformation.

In the *Bhagavad Gita*, the dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna, the guru and disciple, reveals the teaching emphasis of enlightenment traditions and the struggle a disciple might have on the spiritual path. In the early chapters Arjuna is described variously as confused, despondent, unwilling to heed advice, unable to understand the teaching and as being receptive to learning. The concluding statement attributed to Arjuna (18:73) reveals his final understanding and his surrendered attitude: "My delusion is banished and through the grace of God I recognize the truth. I am stable now, with my doubts removed. I shall act according to these words of wisdom." In essence, no longer functioning from egocentric psychological states, he affirms, "I will do God's will."

Discipleship can be easy for a surrendered devotee. It can be difficult, even painful, for one who is called to the spiritual path but is not willing to learn or to comply with the guidelines prescribed by enlightened teachers who have attained inner freedom as a result of their own discipleship endeavors. Difficulties can be the result of incomplete understanding and inability or unwillingness to practice

when sufficient understanding is acquired. Psychological distress, pain, can result when one is forced to confront the need for change, yet resists change. The path can be easy when we are obedient, difficult when we are not obedient, and lacking in results if we are not focused and intent.

Before I met Paramahansaji I had already surrendered my life to God. When I met him I willingly did everything he asked me to do. When he accepted me as a disciple, he asked, "Will you do what I ask?" I said, "Yes, Sir." I always said "yes" to him because I knew his only interest was in helping me to become the person I could be.

Many others were also responsive to his teaching and personal guidance and made rapid spiritual progress. Some, while responsive in the beginning, allowed their own psychological tendencies to later become dominant. Some pretended to be responsive while in his presence, then behaved differently when they were away from him. He was not deceived, because his mental attunement with disciples enabled him to know their every thought and action regardless of whether they were in his presence or near or far removed from it. Disciples who think they can deceive their guru are mistaken. And they certainly cannot deceive themselves, because at a deeper level they know how they are behaving, and why. Some people even foolishly think they can hide their thoughts and behaviors from God, forgetful of the fact that God is their real Higher Self.

Plain living and high thinking is the way of discipleship. To live in harmony with the natural order, while always being open to inner guidance and desiring to know God, is the way of predictable success on the spiritual path. It is the way taught by illumined teachers of the ages. The Buddha's eightfold path describes it, and includes all aspects of life to which attention should be given. When discipleship is truly lived, our behavior and our personal experiences will confirm our dedication. We can easily know whether or not we are living correctly by the results we experience and manifest. The fruits (the manifest results) of the spiritual life are understanding, joy, peace of soul, health, happiness, creativity, knowledge, real purpose in life and all other life-enhancing, constructive expressions of unrestricted unfoldment. If these characteristics are not manifesting in our lives, we need to attend to the basic guidelines and nurture our relationship with God.

Guidelines for behavior are for the purpose of contributing to our

total wellness and harmony with Nature, including people and circumstances. Guidelines for inner work are for the purpose of enabling us to directly relate to God. How our spiritual mentors advise us to live is how we will spontaneously live when we are anchored in God-realization.

On the yogic path, before advanced meditation instruction is given, the devotee is counseled on matters of disciplined behavior. Right behavior and the practice of recommended routines prepare the disciple by providing a stable psychological and environmental foundation upon which spiritual growth can be based. In the *Yoga Sutras* the following guidelines are given (2:29-32):

> The will to refrain from destructive behavior and to actualize constructive behavior, steadiness of meditation posture, the regulation and transformation of vital forces, internalization of attention, concentration, meditation, and superconsciousness are the eight stages of yogic practice leading to realization of God and liberation of consciousness.
>
> The five restraints to be observed are harmlessness, truthfulness, non-stealing, conservation and transmutation of vital forces, and non-possessiveness.
>
> The practices are universally applicable and are not limited by class, place, or time.
>
> The intentional practices to be observed are purity and cleanliness, contentment, self-discipline of the senses, right study and analysis of the nature of consciousness, and surrender in God.

We are established in *harmlessness* when we so live our lives that all feelings, thoughts and actions are entirely benevolent. We are established in *truthfulness* when centered in soul awareness and God-knowledge. We are established in *non-stealing* when thoughts and actions are appropriate with our understanding that we already have everything which is provided by God-as-Nature and no inclination to dishonestly take from another is present. *Conservation and transmutation* of vital forces enables us to experience transformation of body, mind and consciousness from lower to higher states. A *possessive* attitude is impossible as a result of renunciation of attachment and the acceptance of the fact that our reliance is upon our relationship with God, not upon our relationship with persons or

things.

Purity ensures the absence of contaminating, restricting influences. *Contentment* is a result of inner realization and dispassion, enabling us to be inwardly centered without being unduly influenced by emotional reactions to circumstances. *Self-discipline* of the senses is necessary to regulate sensory impulses and desires. *Study and analysis of the nature of consciousness* awakens the soul's innate knowledge of life processes and higher realities. *Surrender in God* weakens ego-boundaries, making possible expanded states of consciousness, mental illumination and God-realization.

By living as recommended, even if disciplined intention is required in the beginning, and it usually is, bad habits are replaced by good habits, destructive behavior is replaced by constructive behavior, and cooperation with the benevolent forces of Nature is possible. Psychological maturity is actualized, meditation is more result-producing and actual experience of God conscious living is made possible.

We cannot remain at the level of conditioned behavior and expect at the same time to be cosmic conscious. While it is true that episodes of expanded awareness (which will surely occur as a result of soul desire for growth and meditation practice) will assist in the transformation of psychological states and behavioral changes, it is helpful for a devotee to do what he can to assist himself to prepare for spiritual growth. Most of what is recommended here requires no great intellectual insight or extreme degree of spiritual awareness. All that is required is commitment, choice, and intentional practice. Even if one is not always highly motivated, if success is not quickly forthcoming, if spiritual gains are not noted, the righteous way can be adhered to as duty, as our offering to life and as proof of our sincerity on the discipleship path.

Discipleship and Ways to Cosmic Consciousness

Superconscious influences are present when we aspire to knowledge and desire spiritual growth. If we were merely self-conscious, we would be primarily concerned with egocentric matters. So the very fact that you aspire to higher states of consciousness means that spiritual forces are active in you, that a degree of awakening has already taken place. From superconsciousness, awareness natu-

rally expands to cosmic consciousness, a vivid sense of being one with all manifest Nature. We are related to Nature at body-mind-soul levels. Our bodies are comprised of the elements and forces of Nature and our physical wellness is largely determined by our harmonious interactions with these elements and forces. Our minds are units of cosmic mind, which is all pervading and in which the universe is manifesting. Therefore, it is necessary for us to have an open relationship with cosmic mind by seeing to it that our minds are well-ordered and devoid of impurities (restricting psychological characteristics). As souls, we are as omnipresent as God is, but this is not always known because of being identified with physical and mental characteristics, and because of misunderstanding about our real nature which causes us to believe in limitation. There are various ways to contribute to expanded states of awareness and cosmic consciousness.

1. *The Social Way* – Open your consciousness to the world about you. You share Planet Earth with over 6 billion human beings and multiplied billions of sentient creatures and life forms. Cultivate an awareness of being in kinship with all life; that is, see all people and all living things as your extended family. Love, bless and serve your larger family in practical ways and by sharing your ideal lifestyle and spiritual awareness. Involve yourself with life-enhancing projects which are bigger than your personal ones. Support others on their awakening path and actively participate in ways to provide spiritual education to persons who want it.

2. *The Psycho-Physiological Way* – Attend to your own psychological growth and to regimens useful to contributing to physical wellness and the refinement of your body and nervous system so that superconscious influences can more easily flow. While it is possible to experience episodes of cosmic awareness in spite of psychological disturbances and physical limitations, it is more usual that cosmic consciousness is experienced when psychological maturity, physical wellness and mental acuity are at optimum, highly functional and responsive levels. Therefore, attend to the guidelines as explained in this Lesson and meditate correctly and regularly.

3. *The Meditation Way* – After experiencing mental calm, practice cosmic sound current meditation (see meditation section, this issue) and expand awareness beyond physical and mental bounda-

ries. Feel the universe to be floating in your consciousness. Feel yourself to be established in pure consciousness, God awareness and awareness of the entire panorama of cosmic manifestation as described in Lesson Two. Once you have experienced, even to a modest degree, inner expansion of consciousness you will never again view your relationship with the world as spiritually unawakened persons do. You will know that you are a spiritual being, a ray of God's reflected light, and that your ego consciousness is but a viewpoint of convenience to allow you to play your role in spacetime. You will learn to function in eternity, in the field of endless time, while knowing your timeless reality.

Take to heart the following New Testament admonition (*The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans* 12:1,2):

> I earnestly request of you, by the goodness of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.
>
> And be not conformed to this world: but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove in your life that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Right where we are, with the means available to us, is where and how we can face up to our personal responsibilities and live in such a way that everything we do becomes a spiritual exercise. Every waking moment we can choose how to look at the world, how to see our relationship to it, how to think, feel and behave. And if there is a struggle, it is not with external forces, it is within ourselves. For according to how we are in understanding, so shall we relate to our world.

We are asked by enlightened teachers to prove in our lives the good, the correct, and the perfect will of God. A teaching statement attributed to the Buddha is, "Only he who lives the life shall know the doctrine." We cannot live with authority unless we live with understanding based on personal experience. All of our metaphysical knowledge, while perhaps useful as information and encouragement to constructive action, is otherwise useless if not put into practice.

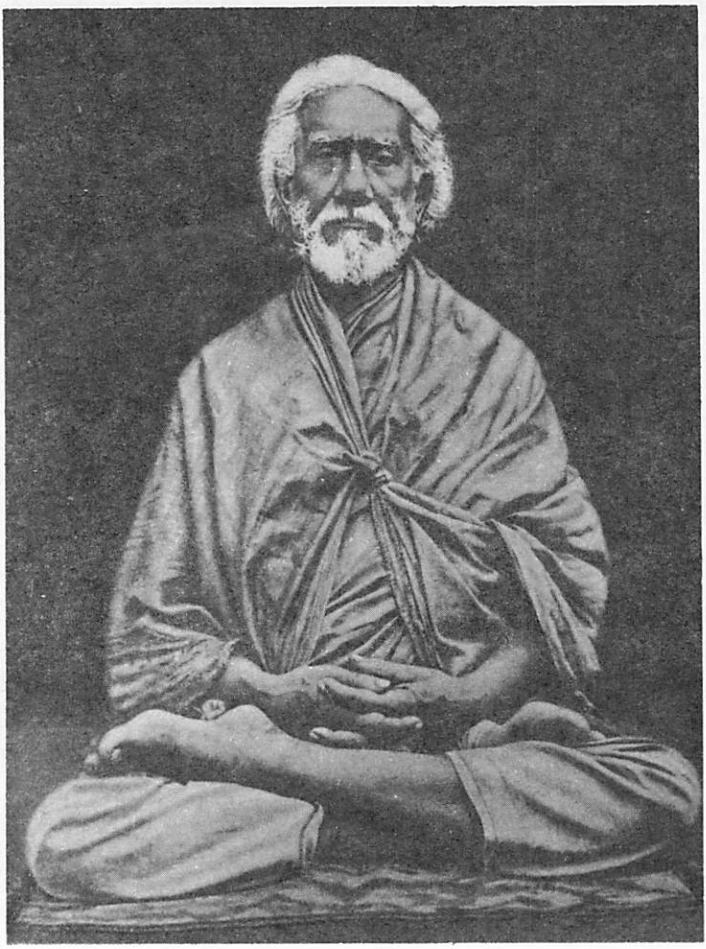
Jesus used very strong words when speaking of the requirements of discipleship. *The Gospel According to Saint Luke* (14:26, 27 & 33):

> If any man comes to me and renounces not his father, and his mother, and his wife, and children, and brothers, and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.
>
> And he who does not bear his cross (assume his responsibilities), and follow my example, cannot be my disciple.
>
> Likewise, he who does not forsake all that he has, cannot be my disciple.

When Mahavatar Babaji gave Lahiri Mahasaya permission to accept disciples and to initiate them into Kriya Yoga practice, he said, "Before you accept a person, ask them to renounce family and possessions." One is not asked to literally withdraw from relationships or possessions, but to see them in a new light and understand them to be in God's care; thereafter to treat all people with spiritual regard and to be a good steward in the use of resources. Discipleship, then, is a new way of living, rather than an attempt to experience spiritual growth while living as determined by conditioned behaviors.

If a disciple has been initiated into a specific enlightenment tradition, that tradition should be honored and its purposes served so that others might come through it to the light of understanding. If a disciple is not relating to such a tradition, one should feel himself to be a disciple of God, living in accord with righteous principles and sharing divine consciousness with everyone in ways most appropriate to circumstances.

Discipleship requires commitment and commitment demands behavioral proof, which is the obvious evidence of one's calling.



Swami Sri Yukteswar, disciple of Lahiri Mahasaya and guru of Paramahansa Yogananda. This enlightened master left his body on March 9, 1936.

Before heaven and earth had taken form all was vague and amorphous. Therefore it was called the Great Beginning. The Great Beginning produced emptiness and emptiness produced the universe...The combined essences of heaven and earth became the yin and yang, the concentrated essences of the yin and yang became the four seasons, and the scattered essences of the four seasons became the myriad creatures of the world.

HUAI-NAN TZU (Second Century B.C.)

To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven. *ECCLESIASTES 3:1*

Lifestyle Guidelines

THE PROSPERING POWER OF GOD'S GRACE

The evolutional power of God's grace influences what it acts upon: to thrive, flourish, and be strengthened, regenerated and fulfilled. Grace is the operant spirit of God expressing in Nature and man. It produces beneficent effects in objective realms while having origins in the subjective ones.

Because the operations of grace are not always clearly understood, we sometimes say, "God works in mysterious ways, His wonders to perform." But to a spiritually awake person, the operations of grace are as easily understood as are the principles of overt action to the average reasonably competent, self-conscious person. We are naturally inclined to accomplish purposes according to our level of understanding about how to do so. In some instance, force may be used. In other instances, one may be more skillful but yet somewhat self-serving or devious. Again, one may learn how to cooperate with natural laws to more easily accomplish purposes, then learn to operate from a higher level of understanding and use metaphysical laws, possibility-thinking and imagination, to work from subjective levels to contribute to outer results. The highest way is to use any honest approach to cause effects while being open to grace. In this way one eventually learns how to let the universe meet all needs and fulfill ultimate purposes.

The transition states through which we move in conscious understanding, as we become increasingly aware and functional, perfectly

illustrate our rising above the laws of causation to the experience of grace in our lives. At the level of physical causation goals are achieved and purposes fulfilled mostly by physical effort. Since we live in a physical universe there will always be some things which will have to be handled at this level. However, we are limited when performing exclusively in this way because there is only so much we can accomplish by personal effort in a given period of time. We can somewhat improve our performance and accomplish more with less energy expenditure by using machines to do routine work.

The next level of understanding, which includes establishing priorities, learning management skills, and being better organized, enables us to eliminate waste effort and accomplish more.

As we grow in understanding and improve our executive skills, we learn to use possibility-thinking, creative imagination and the coordinated efforts of others to accomplish our purposes. From this level, if we are willing to grow and learn, we can learn the metaphysical principles of mental causation. We can discover how states of consciousness, mental states and thoughts, beliefs and expectations influence our environment in subtle yet definite ways. We learn to see opportunities we could not have seen before, we learn to make right choices, to attract circumstances and relationships most ideal for our continued success. We discover that our minds are really units of cosmic mind, "the one mind common to all of us." We then learn that not only do higher impulses influence us through the medium of mind but that our attitudes and thoughts influence the subjective aspect of cosmic mind so that it becomes responsive to us. This is how, on the mental level, we receive guidance and how our desires are fulfilled. When we are open to guidance our own soul awareness provides it, because at the soul level we are one with universal consciousness and all knowledge is within us. Impulses from the soul level are converted into thoughts and ideas that surface in the conscious mind. By recognizing these creative impulses and acting upon them we learn to follow our inner guidance and experience constructive outcomes. On the other hand, by using our reason and best judgment in formulating thoughts and imaging desired outcomes, the subjective level of universal mind expresses whatever we impress upon it. Metaphysicians refer to this process as "the creative law of mind in action." The process is almost infallible, when used correctly, but we have to be sure of what we want when we use

it because the law of mind-manifestation works for anyone and for any result that is in conformity with its operations. This means we can produce constructive outcomes or non-useful or destructive outcomes by the way we think, desire and will. If we are functioning under guidance and intelligent determination, the law of mental causation can be a marvelous tool for helping ourselves to the kind of lifestyle we deserve. If we are impelled by whims, selfish urges or well-intentioned but misguided desire, we can either complicate our lives or merely continue to adjust outer circumstances without accomplishing much in the way of real and lasting value.

Some devotees on the spiritual path are reluctant to use their creative mental abilities because of uncertainty about how to proceed because of fear of the consequences, because of emotional immaturity, or because they feel that personal desire may be contrary to God's will for them. But even when we refrain from intentionally using our creative mental abilities, they are being used anyway but usually without conscious direction. The mental states we entertain and the thoughts, desires and expectations we have in mind, are ever acting as causes which are producing effects. Therefore, it is more desirable to learn to work with the law of mental causation in a conscious, responsible way, using good judgment and always working for constructive outcomes. Use your creative mental abilities to help yourself fulfill your worthy purposes, satisfy legitimate desires and needs, have access to necessary resources, and to contribute to your spiritual growth.

A question: How do we know, when we seem to receive inner guidance, that it is real guidance? Real inner guidance will be accompanied by a sense of conviction, of certainty. Paramahansaji told us, "Learn to make decisions, even if you sometimes make wrong ones. By making decisions you will learn to make right ones most of the time." As with any skill, proficiency improves with practice.

When we receive inner guidance and have an intimation of future possibilities, it is well to reflect more deeply to determine the matter of proper timing. Some circumstances can work out very quickly, while others will require the passage of time because of the need for supporting conditions to be most appropriate. These conditions can be inner as well as outer. It may be that we need time to grow, to become more capable, before we can all be equal to the circumstances we "know" will eventually unfold on the screen of spacetime. An

obvious example is that of a young person envisioning future adult behavior and relationships. The youth must first become an adult before being able to assume adult responsibilities. Again, an adult who decides to study for a university degree must first go through the college and university training program. A successful business project must first be planned and implemented. We may need to further our education, grow to maturity and learn how to be appropriate to the role we envision ourselves playing in the future. External circumstances may also enter into the process. If we move too fast, or not fast enough, our timing may be off and, while inner guidance about possible end results may be accurate, we may need to learn to go with life's flow rather than try too hard from a well-intentioned but unprepared level of awareness.

Just as memories of the past cast their shadows in the mind, so future events can sometimes be known. This is referred to as precognition, perceiving an event before it outwardly occurs. It is also referred to as "a memory of the future." Just as mental impressions resulting from prior perceptions are in our subconscious, so impressions of past causes and their ultimate effects are in the cosmic subconscious. If we are in harmony with our destiny, the future will unfold in an orderly manner. If we are not in harmony with our destiny, we can miss the mark. All other circumstances may be unfolding but we may not be in tune with them.

After almost four years as a member of my guru's monastic order, and a little over a year and a half after he made his transition, I was led to remove myself from the cloistered life and return to a secular one. After two years in the United States Army, as a medical corpsman, I settled in Denver, Colorado, to teach in this tradition. I was enthusiastic and a visionary. My immediate thought was to establish an ashram, a spiritual training center, somewhere in the Rocky Mountain area. I was innocent enough to think that all I had to do was let people know of my plans and hundreds, if not thousands of responsive people would rally to the cause. It didn't work out that way. The response was underwhelming! There were a few kind words of encouragement forthcoming, but no involvement.

Undismayed, I continued to travel, to teach, to write and to acquire experience. Twenty years later, with no conscious planning or personal effort to cause anything to happen, the Center for Spiritual Awareness ministry began to unfold with the international

headquarters and retreat center based, not in the western mountains, but here in the mountains of northeast Georgia. My premonition of an ashram in the mountains was correct, but the location and timing for its emergence was different from what I had initially assumed. In the twenty-year interval I had time to learn, to mature, and to grow spiritually, while, behind the scenes, circumstances not obviously related to my actions were unfolding to make possible our present circumstances. Perhaps you, by looking back over the years, can observe similar occurrences in your life?

So when using our creative abilities, it is well for us to not only think about what we want, but also about what the larger plan may be and how we can prepare ourselves to fit into it.

You can use your creative mental abilities to manifest worthwhile outcomes. If you are not certain about how to envision specific outcomes, then at least use possibility-thinking and imagination to inwardly see general outcomes which are wonderful and in divine order. See yourself, in your mind's eye, experiencing spiritual growth, mental acuity, emotional wellness, physical health, loving and supportive relationships, and success in all worthy ventures. See yourself abundantly supplied with everything you need to be happy and functional. Then help yourself to the extent you can and trust in the goodness of the universe to continue to nourish and support you and to meet your every need, on time and in abundance. Along with envisioning, learn to *feel* the reality of that which is envisioned. Establish it as real in your consciousness. Let it not be merely a belief, a hope or an aspiration, but a soul conviction.

If you sincerely want to be settled in soul peace, you can. If you sincerely want to experience rapid spiritual growth, you can. If you sincerely want to be psychologically mature, you can. If you sincerely want to be physically healthy, you can. If you sincerely want to have loving and supportive human relationships, you can. If you sincerely want to experience the fulfillment of life's purposes, you can. Be a believer in *all things possible* in accord with natural law. Then learn how to cooperate with the benevolent Power that maintains the universe.

In the *Yoga Sutras* (2:21 & 23): "The purpose of the manifest universe is to serve God's will. Cosmic forces emanating from the field of God mix with the field of primal Nature, causing identity with Nature." The universe, being entirely a manifestation of God's

creative forces, is fulfilling the original intention. We have our roles to play in the process. When we learn how to participate, we are naturally provided for and further led in the ways best for us.

By learning how to live righteously, correctly, understanding improves and obstacles are removed. We learn to see through them or they become nonexistent. Again (*Yoga Sutras* 4:3): "The natural flow of creative forces is possible when obstacles to the flow are removed." We can eliminate many obstacles to successful living by making right choices, by involving ourselves with useful behaviors and relationships and renouncing the ones which are not useful to higher ends. We can also reduce the influences of internal psychological and physical restricting characteristics by honest self-analysis, consciously adjusting mental states, and by meditating to invite superconscious influences into the mind and body.

I once visited a wholesale book distribution company in a western city. The manager showed me through the office complex and pointed out the mail room, telephones and other communications devices. He said, "We do our best to *remove every obstacle* to communication so that the potential customer can have direct access to us." We should, likewise, *remove every obstacle* which might be a barrier to our communication with the universe and with God.

Living does not have to forever be a matter of overcoming, of "putting up with" or of coping. We should be able to move freely through spacetime and have open access to higher realities.

As we continue to grow and learn, more subtle ways of cooperating with the universe become known to us. We learn to experience beneficial unfoldments as the results of superconscious intention and grace.

We exercise *superconscious intention* when we consciously rest in the awareness of our true nature, grounded in the Infinite, and *gently* desire results to manifest. Our intention, then, reinforced by a mild urge to see results, becomes an action of divine will because we are grounded in God. At this level of realization, God's will is our will. There is no ego-involvement, no need to prove anything or to exercise power, merely an inclination to be a conduit through which worthwhile unfoldments can manifest to bless others.

After meditation, or at anytime when you feel mentally clear and grounded in the Infinite, whatever worthwhile circumstance you feel inclined to see unfold, *gently intend, mildly wish* for it to manifest and

it will *effortlessly* express. Whatever you "ask for" while settled in soul awareness, because you desire selflessly and are in tune with the Power that does everything, will occur. I am sure you have already done this countless times, perhaps without knowing how the process operates. You surely have had mild desires, gentle wishes, that were fulfilled with little or no effort on your part. This is the higher operation of the law of causation.

But there is a yet higher law of causation. It is the law of "universal economy." The universe, being self-sustaining and self-renewing, is always in motion at all levels. When you are established in soul peace, when you are perfectly in harmony with the rhythms of the universe, whatever you need will be provided. It may be more understanding, it may be an ordering of your thoughts, it may be resources, it may be a relationship—whatever it is you need to maintain your soul peace, the universe will provide. It does this to restore you to peace. If you are spiritually aware and peaceful, and your peace is disturbed in any way because of a need of any kind, the universe will move to restore you to peace by meeting that need. This is the law of grace in action.

It is often true that some of our good fortune is the result of our prior actions, of the causes we set into motion by thinking, wanting, believing or by physical work. Such good fortune is the working out of constructive karma (causes). We can acknowledge our good fortune but should also be aware that if the causes lose their motive force, or their effects are actualized, thereby balancing the cause and effect process, good fortune resulting from past actions can cease and new causes will have to be put into operation. This can and, should, be done as long as we are yet functioning at the level of physical and mental causation. But the higher way, the liberating way, is to learn how to function superconsciously, by being open to inner guidance and using gentle intention, then to go beyond that level to the level at which grace is always sufficient.

Many metaphysicians err in believing that their reasonable mastery of mental laws of causation prove their spiritual understanding. They do not know that further growth is possible. Just as mental laws of causation are superior to the operations of physical force, so superconscious influences are superior to mental operations and grace is superior to them.

Shrine dedicated to Mahavatar Babaji at Ranikhet in the Himalayas, Almora District. Photograph taken January, 1991.

When the yogi harmonizes his breath and experiences tranquility, his heart (essence) becomes calm by the practice of Kriya pranayama. The influences of nature-born qualities are transcended. Then the seeker experiences the fullness of God, enters into oneness with the inner Self, and eventually with the ultimate Self (pure consciousness). This is the highest state one can attain, which is eternal realization. *LAHIRI MAHASAYA*

The manifesting symbol (evidence) of God is OM. One should meditate on this Word, contemplating it, surrendering to it and realizing its real nature. Contemplation on OM results in cosmic consciousness and the removal of mental and physical obstacles to success on the spiritual path. *YOGA SUTRAS 1:27-29*

Cosmic Sound Current Meditation
THE DIRECT WAY TO GOD-REALIZATION

When the meditator's attention is internalized and all preliminary procedures and techniques have been discarded, contemplation of subtle and fine levels of superconsciousness leading to God consciousness and transcendence is possible. To aid such contemplation, identification of awareness with OM, the cosmic sound current is recommended.

The Sanskrit spelling of *a, u* and *m* is pronounced as "OM." The three letters can be described as referring to unconsciousness, subconsciousness, and the waking state. The silence after the last letter refers to superconsciousness, the fourth and superior state of consciousness. Without superconsciousness, the pure state, the three modified states could not exist, just as without the field of pure consciousness the relative cosmic forces could not exist.

The cosmic sound current, the creative force out of which universal manifestation unfolds, emanates a sound frequency, which is OM. It is also referred to as the *Word* of God. It is the manifesting symbol, the evidence, the proof of its origin. The origin of OM is the Godhead. That is why it should be meditated upon, contemplated, identified with, and traced to its source. Doing so affords one the easiest and most direct way to God-realization.

The reality of God is not known by thought processes or by use of the intellect, for it is beyond thought and intellect. The reality of God is not known by examining the various aspects of manifest Nature, at levels gross, subtle or fine, for it is beyond the field of Nature. God can only be fully known by direct relationship, by personal experience at the soul level. We are spiritual beings; therefore, to fully know the reality of God we must experience God at the spiritual level, at the level of soul to God.

Sound current meditation is known and practiced by devotees of many enlightenment traditions. Some teaching traditions recommend only sound current meditation and do not teach other preliminary procedures. In the Kriya Yoga tradition we teach preliminary procedures for the purposes described when they are taught and to prepare the devotee for sound current meditation.

When the devotee first listens within the inner ear for evidence of sound, various sound frequencies may be heard. These may be physical sounds, electrical sounds, and prana frequency sounds. Eventually a clear sound will be heard and this can be taken as the sound current to focus upon for meditation. Even if the clear sound is not the OM sound, using it as a meditation mantra will lead the devotee's attention to finer levels of perception and the actual hearing of the cosmic sound current.

The sound may be heard in one ear more dominantly than the other in the early stages of practice. When the solar prana is active, the sound may be heard in the right ear. When the lunar prana is active, the sound may be heard in the left ear. When pranas become balanced and subtle currents move more dominantly through sushumna, the sound will be heard simultaneously in both ears.

It does not require particular spiritual advancement to hear an inner sound, which is why cosmic sound current meditation is suitable for anyone desirous of going more deeply into the holy silence. It can be heard as a result of careful listening. It may spontaneously arise as a result of pranayama practice and when looking into the spiritual eye, because currents of life force ascend into the brain centers at such times, becoming more pronounced there. The sound may also be spontaneously heard when in the presence of a spiritually awake person or when at a meditation shrine or temple, because of the stronger influence of high energy frequencies being radiated. Sometimes, during yogic initiation, when the

devotee's inner forces are stirred, the sound spontaneously manifests.

The sound variations may be as described in Lesson Five, in which the prana frequencies of the chakras are explained. As with any of the more advanced meditation-technique practices, sound current meditation should be experienced and not overly talked about except with one's meditation teacher or guru. Persons who have no experience with the inner sound will have nothing of value to share about it, and superficial speculation about it will merely detract attention from the more important matter of working with it.

Cosmic sound current meditation leads the devotee's attention into the inner realms, from gross to subtle and from subtle to fine levels of perception. Because the sound has origins in the Godhead, following it to the source will result in perception and experience of God. One need not believe this; one need only practice, remaining alert and watchful.

A state of relaxed alertness is necessary to the process of continuing to probe more deeply into examination of the sound current and to move through subtle and fine levels of awareness. Along the way various perceptions are possible, which can be observed and then ignored in favor of more subtle and fine ones. Enjoy the inner silence, enjoy the peace, enjoy bliss, enjoy light perceptions, enjoy ever more subtle sound perceptions, but continue to flow attention to the source. To linger too long at any level is to delay progress. To be overly anxious about results will likewise interfere with progress.

When attention is focused, with an attitude of relaxed, alert surrender, there will be occasions of insight and sometimes sudden shifts in consciousness, resulting in clear perceptions and occasions of expansion of consciousness. If one is not alert, if one is inclined to be overly preoccupied with what is perceived or experienced, identification with sounds, feelings and other perceptions may result, causing the meditator's attention to become fixed at one level. In the early stages, if the meditator is not rested or does not remain alert, sleep may occur with initial relaxation and internalization of attention, or a reverie state may occur during which dream-like images are observed. This results in identification with subconscious mental imagery. A similar state, but with superconscious influence, can result in clear, vivid visions of an astral nature, which are still evidence of mental transformations due to the influence of emotions

and thought activity. During such episodes there can be useful spiritual growth and some revelation, but these perceptions have to be carefully analyzed in order to separate illusion from fact.

Paramahansaji often told a story about a man who was invited to visit his king. Arriving early at the palace he was told to wait in the outer courtyard. Observing the beautiful nearby gardens he decided to stroll through them, to observe and enjoy the variety of flowers, trees and beautiful ponds. He became so fascinated with the panorama that he completely forgot to get back to the palace entrance at the appointed time. When he finally hurried there, he was told the king was no longer available and that he would have to leave. The conclusion of the story was that if the man had controlled his urge to explore the gardens, he would have been able to talk with the king. Then upon establishing a friendly relationship with the king, he could have, quite possibly, had access to the palace grounds any time after that.

A meditator who becomes overly fascinated by inner perceptions this side of God-realization is like the man who wandered through the palace gardens. He enjoyed his tour but he missed out on the reason for his having been invited to the palace. Therefore, work through the maze of subtle inner perceptions according to need, and even enjoy the process if you like, but don't forget to keep your appointment with God when you meditate.

When diving deep into meditation, continue to contemplate the possibility of ultimate discovery by keeping God and the field of pure consciousness as your meditation focus. Besides various subconscious influences, there may be influences from the storehouse of unconscious impressions and tendencies. Various tempting perceptions may manifest in the mind's eye. It is not that any external force is attempting to keep us from God-realization, only that the contents of our own mind provide distractions to concentration.

The meditator may experience mental visions of sexual opportunity, as repressed urges manifest their influences. Or one may feel powerful, like a god, and mistakenly assume that he has a mighty mission to fulfill. If one has a mission, it will be revealed and it will unfold through God's grace. If this happens, there should be surrendered compliance, but not ego involvement allowed to taint one's consciousness and behavior. One may acquire insight into how miracles occur, and be tempted to immediately experiment in ma-

nipulating astral and physical phenomena. One may err in assuming that with a reasonably high degree of spiritual attainment, the ultimate state has been experienced.

The best indication of our spiritual progress is how our life is express on a day-to-day basis. Are we more alert, more perceptive, more compassionate, more attentive to necessary details, more understanding of life processes and considerate of the needs of others? Are we more God-centered, more intuitive, more cosmic conscious? Are we more surrendered in God, faithful on our destined path, and pure in heart, mind, and behavior? Regardless of the subtle perceptions we may have during meditation, our daily perceptions and behaviors remain the best proof of our degree of soul realization.

The Technique of Cosmic Sound Current Meditation

Sit in a quiet, darkened room. Quiet is important if attention is to be given to inner sound perception. A darkened room will ensure that no external light filters through your eyelids to interfere with inner light perception.

Proceed with your usual preliminary meditation routine until you are relaxed and centered. Look into the spiritual eye, with attention and awareness there and in the higher brain centers. Gently close your ears by pressing with your thumbs. Cover your eyes with your hands, with the finger tips at the spiritual eye center. This positioning of your hands will help you be more intentional. It is also possible that prana flows from your fingers can contribute to focusing life forces in the brain.

Look deeply into the spiritual eye and listen in both inner ears. Contemplate the reality of God and the field of pure consciousness. Be willing to experience inner perceptions and expand consciousness. Be willing to allow the meditation process to flow spontaneously. Look into deep inner space through the spiritual eye. Mentally chant OM for a few minutes, then let your mental chanting cease. Give yourself to OM contemplation. Merge in OM. Expand in OM. Whatever sounds are heard, gently endeavor to get behind them to more subtle sounds, then behind the subtle sounds to finer sounds, until a clear, steady sound is heard. If the clear, steady sound is heard at the beginning, contemplate it immediately.

After a while, if your arms and shoulders become a bit tired, put

your hands down and continue with inner contemplation for as long as the flow of meditation proceeds. You can do this for half an hour, or much longer, according to your inclination.

When contemplating the cosmic sound current, just examine it while wanting to know more about it. Remind yourself that the primal sound is the prana frequency of the creative force pervading the universe and that its origins are in God. Contemplate its origins. Contemplate the reality of God. Contemplate too, the reality of the field of pure consciousness, the existence aspect of God.

It is taught (*Yoga Sutras* 1:29) that contemplation of the holy Word "results in cosmic consciousness and the removal of mental and physical obstacles to success on the spiritual path." The "obstacles" are then described (1:30) as: disease, laziness, doubt, negligence, procrastination, philosophical confusion, failure to make progress, attachment to sense pleasures, misperception, and mental distractions." Further, (1:31): "Other side effects of distractions may be grief, anxiety, unsteadiness of body during meditation, and irregular breathing patterns." The verse immediately following (1:32) provides the solution to these problems: "To control these mental distractions one should practice meditation and contemplate that single aspect which is the manifesting creative force of God."

All of the meditation techniques taught in these Lessons will help the sincere devotee to experience rapid progress on the enlightenment path. They afford opportunity to immediately regulate internal processes and transcend all obstacles to success. As a result of superconscious experience many of the problems one has will be cleared from consciousness, mind and body. The ones which are not cleared by superconscious influence alone, can be handled more easily because of improved understanding and practical attention given to their removal.

A primary obstacle to success on the spiritual path is the devotee's unwillingness to confront psychological problems and physical distress. After meditation, engage in self-honest analysis of your psychological states, physical states and environmental conditions. Then do what you can to clear all obstacles to optimum function and results-oriented behavior. While superconscious influences and higher realizations are helpful, there is often much that we need to handle on a practical level by making right choices.

Grace is ever available to us, but we must also help ourselves

become receptive to it.

A devotee once asked his guru, "Sir, I pray for God's grace and for your grace." The teacher said, "God's grace you already have, and my grace you already have. All that is needed is your own grace, your own willingness to help yourself."

Shortly after I met Paramahansaji, he told me, "Roy, when you came to me, God took 50 percent of your karma. Guru's grace can remove 25 percent. The remaining 25 percent, you have to take care of." He used percentages by way of illustration, not as exact proportions. When we commit ourselves to the enlightenment path, we avoid much future difficulty because of no longer being at the mercy of whims and confused behavior. This is why my guru said that God removes so much karma. Also, with commitment on the path we experience a shift in consciousness, so that past causes are somewhat transcended and their influences weakened. The instruction of the guru, his inner work on our behalf, and the infusion of spiritual force we receive from the relationship, also contributes to our spiritual growth and the weakening of the forces of causation. However, there are psychological characteristics that we have to change by choice and determination, and only we can choose our behaviors and be attentive to right living and meditation practice. It is a mistake to falsely assume that just because we are on the spiritual path, there is nothing else we have to do to help ourselves but to love God and meditate.

Include cosmic sound current meditation in your daily meditation routine. Explore its possibilities and let your consciousness expand to infinity.

Note: An optional preliminary routine, just before practicing internal cosmic sound current meditation, is to audibly chant OM in the following way. When you are ready to proceed with the technique, before placing your hands as described, audibly chant OM several times. Then, more quietly. Then in a soft whispered chant. Then position the hands and continue mental chanting. After a while, be silent, flowing attention inward.

OM is intoned as "Ooooooooooooooooommmmmmm," until the sound fades away into the silence, and then is repeated until the inclination to chant subsides.

Personal Comprehension Review

Use this review opportunity to improve your understanding of the Lesson material and facilitate your practice.

1. What is the eightfold path as taught by the Buddha?

2. What are the five restraints as taught in the yogic system?

3. What are the five intentional practices to be observed?

4. What are three ways to help ourselves experience expanded states of consciousness?

5. Write a definition of grace, as you understand it.

6. Why should we learn to use our creative mental abilities?

7. What is precognition? Have you had a precognitive experience?

8. Review the personal planning pages in the back of my book *All Things Possible* and fill them out if you have not already done so.

9. What is the cosmic sound current?

10. Review the procedure for practicing sound current contemplation and practice it during your next meditation session.

Reflections

The verses quoted from the *Yoga Sutras* on page 5 of this Lesson provide guidelines for behaviors which are prescribed as supports for living a balanced life and experiencing progressive spiritual growth. Mere outward observance of these guidelines, without understanding and experiencing the spirit of them, will provide a degree of order in one's life but not the opportunity to actualize higher possibilities.

Ideally, we should be able to live without making mistakes. We should be able to think clearly, plan intelligently, behave appropriately and achieve worthy aims with a minimum of difficulty. Our day-to-day relationships and circumstances should unfold easily and our spiritual growth should be orderly and progressive. This ideal mode of living is rare in today's world because the average person is engaged in self-defeating behaviors—because of not knowing any better or because of psychological restrictions, as well as because of living a conditioned human-centered existence.

The guidelines for regulating behavior and for intentional actions (*kriyas*) as explained in the *Yoga Sutras* (2:29-32) are for the purpose of assisting devotees to live the kind of life that will be spontaneously expressed when they are enlightened. All illumined teachers of whom I have knowledge emphasize the need for devotees to cultivate self-control when necessary and to engage in practices which can contribute to expanded awareness and spiritual growth. Now and then, a self-proclaimed teacher with a "new" discovery about the enlightenment process will assert that self-discipline and intentional cultivation of the virtues is not necessary—that all that is necessary is to love God and meditate and everything else will work in out in due time. They may be speaking from their own experience of spontaneous awakening and its resulting influences on attitude and behavior but their teaching is not always helpful to persons who do not experience spontaneous awakening. Until genuine awakening occurs, adherence to the guidelines affords one the opportunity to

somewhat order his life, expand consciousness and improve personal understanding.

More, the disciplines required to enable us to adhere to the guidelines also enable us to be more successful in meditation practice. By regulating attitudes, feelings, sense urges and mental processes on an ongoing basis we are more likely to be able to regulate internal processes when sitting to meditate. The self-mastery acquired as a result of conscious, intentional living provides us with the skills which can be helpful in withdrawing attention from externals at will. When we are even-minded and emotionally stable in daily affairs, it follows that even-mindedness and emotional stability will be natural when engaged in meditative contemplation. The end result of our intentional practices is that our minds become cleared of irrational beliefs and our lives become free from psychological drives and tendencies which may have formerly been influential and restrictive. Even if spiritual growth were not experienced—though it certainly will be—one settled in appropriate behavior and intentional practices would be able to at least live a more balanced stress free life, a decent human existence, which would be of value to the person and to society as a whole.

When one in normal human consciousness is able to live a peaceful, balanced life the creative forces of the soul, which are innately inclined to growth, will gradually contribute to spiritual unfoldment. By removing inner restrictions of all kinds, evolutional forces flowing throughout the universe are better able to assist individual progress. It is helpful to remember that we are innately inclined to unfold our soul capacities; that is, spiritual growth is natural and spontaneous when restricting influences are eliminated. For one who is even partially successful in living a balanced, appropriate life the possibilities of psychological and spiritual growth are greatly enhanced. For persons unable, for one reason or another, to experience definite spiritual growth in spite of good intentions and best efforts, the attempts made to live in a responsible manner will be helpful. Further psychological damage is somewhat avoided and good intentions can improve self-esteem—possibly allowing for the acceptance of good fortune and an opening to God's grace when such occasions prevail. Therefore, no righteous effort is ever wasted and no spiritual progress is completely meaningless.

It is helpful to understand that right actions do not necessarily

result in immediate rewards; that is, it may not seem that God is acknowledging our efforts. On the other hand, if our belief in God's goodness results in our being able to accept life's blessings then our belief can be a creative cause of welcome improvements and unfoldments. Sometimes simple faith in God proves more result-producing than contrived efforts which are the result of partial metaphysical knowledge.

What about the testimony of some persons who claim not to pay much attention to such matters as intentional positive thinking, stress management, nutrition, the needs of others or even to regular meditation yet who seem to experience improvement in awareness and function? They are obviously self-determined and sufficiently functional to continue their lifestyle in spite of their neglect of recommended guidelines and practices. Their unfolding soul destiny may be the dominant influential factor and they may continue to improve until obvious spiritual awakening occurs. On the other hand, they may experience the effects of their undisciplined behavior and reap disturbing results. Only God knows the future of such souls and it is not our place to make any judgments.

While nothing we can do can *cause* enlightenment—because we are already free at the soul level—the relative things we do to help ourselves can neutralize and remove restricting influences so that our innate perfection can more easily express. When you do the best you can and it seems not to be sufficient to result in useful changes, pray to God for assistance. God is all pervasive, everywhere present, within and around us. When we pray we interact with God and God responds, because God must.

If you sometimes feel that God is removed from you, remind yourself of the fact that God is the single Reality of all that is. God is the omnipresent, omniscient Cosmic Soul as well as that which is expressing as you, as me, and as everyone else. Since there is nothing but God expressing, God is present where you are as well as present as you. When the mind is clouded and intelligence is veiled, this fact may be forgotten. When the mind is clear and intelligence is operational, the truth is known. This is why clearly knowing the truth about God liberates the soul.

Enlightened masters teach that so long as we are served by the universe we have a duty to serve it. Therefore, so long as we are functioning in this or any realm we have a duty to participate with the

conditions of this or other realms. This is why duty to ourselves, duty to others and duty to Nature is extolled in the scriptures. We are provided for by the universe and we have a duty to nourish it in return. We have been helped by others who have made possible many of life's necessities and we have a duty to provide for others who are presently in need, as well as to leave this world a safe, nourishing place for future generations. This is why enlightened masters continue to serve in the world so long as they remain embodied. They do so, not for themselves, but as righteous duty. In all realms, subtle and fine, this side of the field of pure consciousness, souls are nourished by cosmic forces and have a duty to participate with them so that order is maintained at all levels of manifest creation.

Rather than be fixated on guidelines and procedures, attend to them while remaining inwardly aware of your essential pure nature, with your major purpose in life clearly in your awareness. To focus on prescribed practices while remaining self-centered will only result in supporting a self-centered condition. Observe the recommended guidelines for the purpose of releasing your awareness from restricting circumstances, feeling yourself to be increasingly cosmic conscious and functional. To function, we must have a clear sense of purpose in life. What is your purpose for being in this world? What is the major emphasis of your life? To what ends are your thoughts, energies and actions directed? Whatever your major purpose, let it be a noble one and let it be worthy of you. From time to time, review your life-purpose and clearly write it in your private journal so that it is carefully defined and will be the dominant guiding force in your life. When you write your life-purpose you not only reinforce your intention but you share your consciousness of conviction with God's mind. You will then more easily remain focused and intentional and the universe will assist you in your personal efforts to fulfill your purpose.

Here is my major life-purpose: *To share accurate information about God and the way to spiritual understanding with as many responsive people as possible—and to provide committed devotees of God with a soul-to-God connection by initiating them into the practices of Kriya Yoga.* This represents the major purpose of my creative efforts and the focus of the Center for Spiritual Awareness ministry.

God Does Provide
The Security of Perfect Peace

...there is yet a higher law of causation. It is the law of "universal economy." The universe, being self-sustaining and self-renewing, is always in motion at all levels. When you are established in soul peace, when you are perfectly in harmony with the rhythms of the universe, whatever you need will be provided. It may be more understanding, it may be an ordering of your thoughts, it may be resources, it may be a relationship—whatever it is you need to maintain your soul peace, the universe will provide. It does this to restore you to peace. If you are spiritually aware and peaceful, and your peace is disturbed in any way because of a need of any kind, the universe will move to restore you to peace by meeting that need. This is the law of grace in action.

God expresses at obvious, universal levels just as easily as in subjective realms. Therefore, trust in God's goodness, always.

– Roy Eugene Davis

CENTER FOR SPIRITUAL AWARENESS
STUDIES IN TRUTH LESSON GUIDE
MASTER COURSE NUMBER SEVEN

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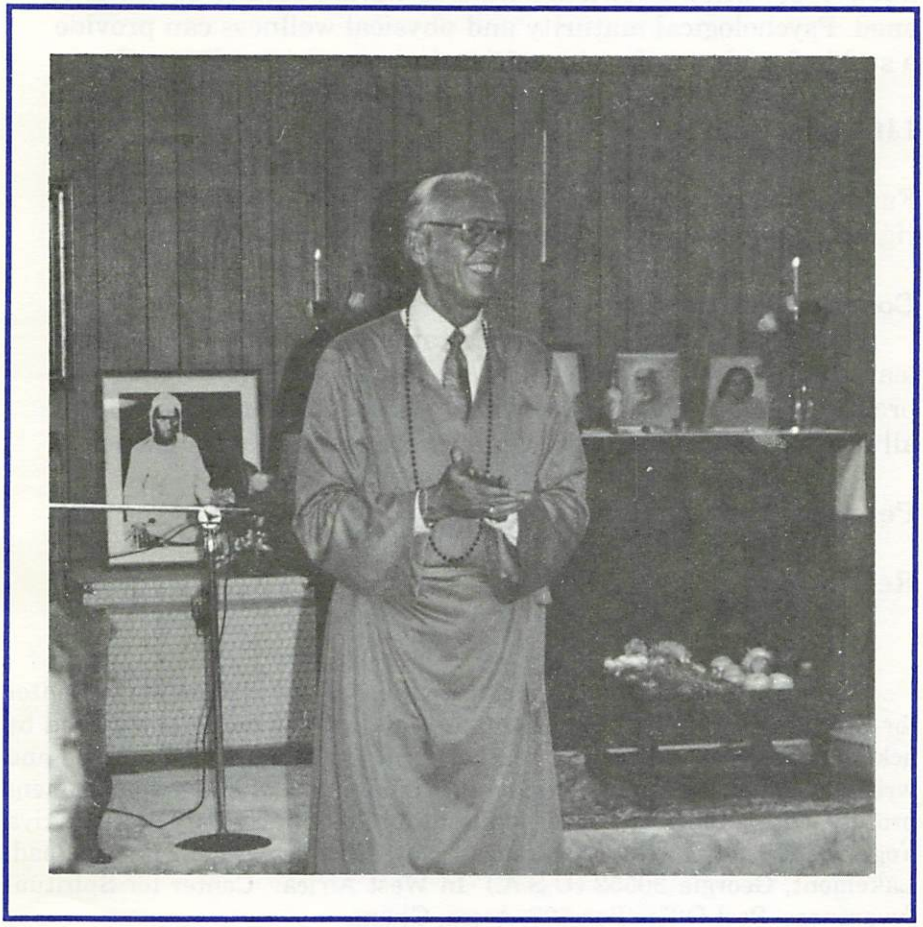
A Vision of Possibilities

THE PSYCHOLOGY & PHYSIOLOGY OF PERSONAL ENLIGHTENMENT



Renewal befalls all creatures under God; but for God there is no renewal, only all eternity. What is eternity? It is characteristic of eternity that in it youth and being are the same, for eternity would not be eternal could it become and were not always. *MEISTER ECKHART (1260-1327)*
Sermons

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Though we are, at the level of being, already possessed of all knowledge, when knowledge unfolds we are said to be enlightened. Psychological maturity and physical wellness can provide a stable foundation for our spiritual awakening and growth.

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Studies in Truth Lesson Guides are published and distributed by Center for Spiritual Awareness for private use and guided study supervised by acknowledged CSA ministers, teachers and group leaders. Prepared and written by Roy Eugene Davis as an examination of the enlightenment process, with emphasis on the traditions, philosophy and practice of Kriya Yoga. Center for Spiritual Awareness, Post Office Box 7, Lake Rabun Road, Lakemont, Georgia 30552 (U.S.A.) In West Africa: Center for Spiritual Awareness, Post Office Box 507, Accra, Ghana.

There are eight aspects of God which can be experienced: light, sound, peace, calmness, love, joy, wisdom, and power. To experience God as light during meditation brings calmness of mind, purifying it and giving it clarity. The more deeply one contemplates the inner light, the more one perceives all things made of that light.

PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA

If a devotee continues in contemplation, remaining immersed in the holy stream of the cosmic sound current, he gradually comes to a pleasant state of consciousness wherein his heart wholly abandons attachments to the external world and becomes devoted to the internal one.

SWAMI SRI YUKTESWAR

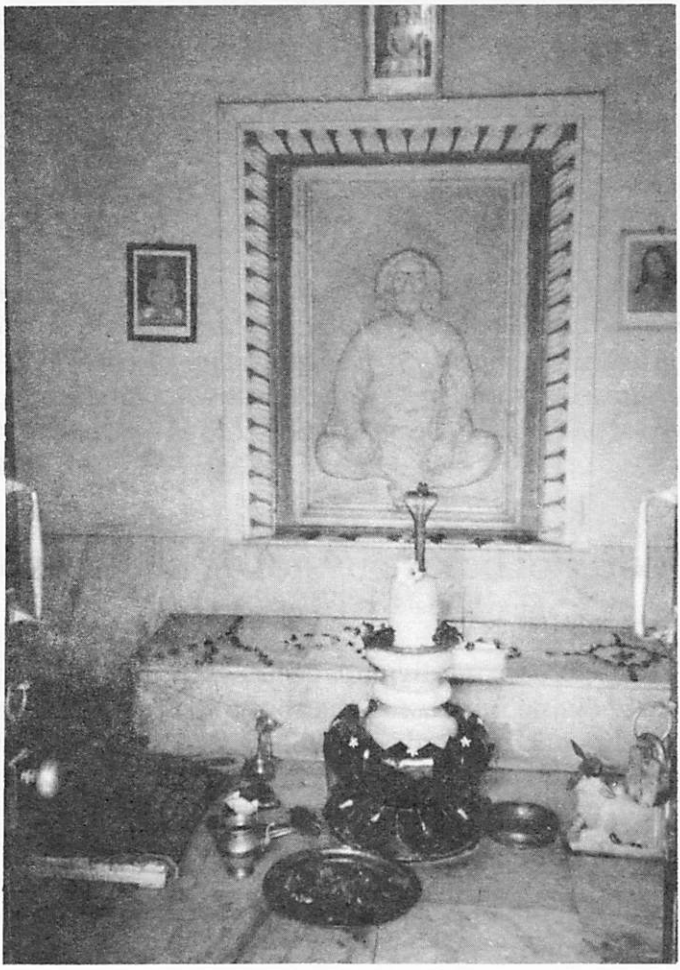
A Vision of Possibilities

THE PSYCHOLOGY & PHYSIOLOGY OF PERSONAL ENLIGHTENMENT

The ideal of actualizing divine capacities is an aspiration prompted by the innate divine impulse of the soul to be restored to conscious awareness of its unrestricted condition. Every embodied soul has an intuitive sense, a vision of possibilities which arises from deeper levels of being and is not the result of outer persuasion. It is by responding to this urge to know the truth about life that one experiences rapid progress on the spiritual path.

Only the faint of heart despair of ever being able to awaken and to know the absolute truth which liberates the mind and consciousness from unknowingness. The courageous, the resolved, the committed, the intentional soul welcomes the opportunity to explore higher possibilities, knowing that the conclusion of inquiry and participation in the learning and growth process will definitely result in glorious fulfillment.

From a relative point of view, human evolution on Planet Earth is slow. We may witness the struggles resulting from human efforts to survive, to cope with environmental and social pressures, and to attain a comfortable degree of dignity, and be appalled at the seeming slowness of progress. On the other hand, we can also observe the extremely rapid growth episodes which have occurred during the



Shrine area of Sri Yukteswar Memorial Temple built over his burial site at his ashram near the Bay of Bengal: Puri, India.

past few centuries as well as the accelerated unfoldment of knowledge and the use of it. Enlightened persons see evolutionary processes from a more cosmic perspective, not in terms of centuries or millenniums, thousand-year time-segments, but in cycles of thousands, millions, and billions of solar years.

Vedic seers calculated a universal cycle as being 4,300,560,000 years in duration. This is called a Day of Creation and is calculated by basing the relationship between the length of the solar year of 365 days (approximately) and a multiple of pi (3.1416), the ratio of the circumference to the diameter of a circle. Further calculations result in an estimate of 314,159,000,000,000 (three hundred fourteen trillion, one hundred fifty-nine billion) solar years as the duration of the manifestation of the universe. The 24,000 year equinoctial cycle, with its subcycles, is a much smaller cycle relating to our solar system's location in the Milky Way Galaxy.

According to today's cosmologists, the universe is but fifteen to twenty billion years old, with the formation of Planet Earth having occurred an estimated 4 billion years ago. The universe, then, is relatively young and man is but a recent happening, perhaps with beginnings a million years ago.

The majority of human beings, unaware of their divine nature and true potential, plod through their lives on Earth, doing their best to cope with circumstances and experience marginal improvement. They do not know that almost unlimited possibilities for growth and expression are available to them. Even persons who respond to their religious impulse seldom awaken to a level of understanding beyond that which is sufficient to provide them a degree of mental peace and a vague intimation of personal security. Over the centuries prophets have described aspects of higher realities and have declared that man is not a mere physical being, but a god; yet few really hear this affirmation of the soul.

On the other hand, out of the thousands of millions of souls which have passed this way on their sojourn through spacetime, a few have been able to hear and to respond. The information shared in these Lessons has been known and taught for thousands of years but can only be recognized by persons who are sufficiently intelligent to discern. And it does require intelligence to comprehend these teachings. More, it requires commitment to adhere to them and experience benefits. During the present time-cycle increasing numbers

of intelligent seekers are emerging from the body of humanity. This is why these teachings are now being made more widely available. The general guidelines are suitable for everyone, as they are the principles every person should know in order to live an ordered, comfortable human existence. The inner teachings are for the discerning, because intelligence and commitment are required to understand and utilize them.

With present knowledge, it is no longer necessary for a reasonably conscious person to remain at the mercy of psychological conditions and environmental circumstances. By right effort and God's grace, an intentional person can cooperate with evolutionary forces and experience rapid spiritual growth. This is the central theme of the philosophy and way of Kriya Yoga. Remember that *kriya* means "action," the things we do, or the episodes which occur spontaneously, which contribute to our total wellness and spiritual growth. Any person who is living a conscious, intentional life for the purpose of experiencing total wellness and spiritual growth is a Kriya Yogi, even if the term is not known. He or she is involved with procedures for the purpose of experiencing spiritual growth and knowing a relationship with the Infinite. A Christian, Buddhist, Jew, Moslem, Hindu—as well as persons who do not relate to any religious tradition—all are Kriya Yogis if disciplined and intentional for the purpose of assisting themselves to spiritual growth and illumination of consciousness.

The Psychology of Enlightenment

Spiritual growth is facilitated by psychological health and emotional maturity. The Greek word *psyche* refers to "soul." Some psychologists define the word as "mind." But soul is not mind; soul uses mind. And mind is not brain; the brain is the organ of the mind. The brain is powered by electrical currents. The mind is energized by the soul's life force. Consciousness expresses through mind and brain but is of the soul. When consciousness and life force are withdrawn from the brain, the body is acknowledged to be dead. When soul awareness is withdrawn from the mind, the mind persists but is not operational. Its processes and transformations cease. During episodes of soul transcendence, during meditation or at other times when transcendence is spontaneously experienced, the soul's awareness is withdrawn from the mental field while the soul experiences

its nature as pure being, as conscious existence.

The mental field has many levels. When thought processes and mental operations are refined, superconsciousness is dominant. When thought processes and mental operations are dominant, ordinary consciousness is experienced. During dreaming sleep, subconscious states are dominant. During deep, dreamless sleep, unconsciousness is dominant. Yet even when conscious, the average person is unaware of the contents of the unconscious and only partly aware of subconscious contents. We are often influenced by impulses and drives rooted in the unconscious of which we are unaware; likewise, we often assume that we are in charge of our thought processes, emotions and sensory urges when, in fact, these may be determined by subconscious conditionings. For this reason we sometimes say that even conscious people may be, for the most part, asleep, living a dream-like life instead of a really alert, completely conscious one.

The ideal, for one on the spiritual path, is to eliminate as much as possible psychological conflicts which interfere with constructive actualized behavior, then be able to experience over a period of time complete psychological transformation so that formerly inaccessible areas of the mind are known and utilized. Because of the magnitude of subconscious and unconscious conditionings stored in the recesses of the mind, soul awareness is often restricted. Identified with the mind, soul awareness can only express to the degree that the mental field is ordered and accessible. It is sometimes possible for one to withdraw awareness from the mental field, or assume a more objective view of the mind's contents, affording one the opportunity to have an experience of being other than the mind and its conditionings. We can do this by meditation and by assuming a detached attitude at other times. In this way it is possible to be aware of mental contents and rearrange them or discard what is no longer wanted. But since many of the impressions are deeply imbedded, and areas of the mind are not normally consciously accessible, it sometimes requires diligent attention to the process of mental clearing in order to be relieved of the burden of conditionings. Calm analysis can be helpful, meditation can be extremely useful, and intentional living can result in a reorganization of mental processes as well as the exhausting and releasing of stored mental impressions.

While observing and handling what can be observed and handled, without becoming obsessively preoccupied with self-analysis, the

positive approach to reorganizing the contents of deeper levels of the mind is to engage in intentional, constructive behavior. By doing this you will become more proficient, learn to accomplish your worthy purposes, acquire knowledge of how to live successfully, become self-confident, and expand your consciousness and appreciation for living. A self-centered approach to attempting to solve psychological problems is self-defeating. What is needed is to learn to live correctly and the only way to do that, is to do it.

The Physiology of Enlightenment

Physiology is the science dealing with the functions of living organisms. The human body is a living organism, enlivened by the soul's life force. Your life is God's life. God's life is also referred to as the Holy Spirit; therefore, your body is literally the temple of the Holy Spirit.

Your body is designed to accommodate your consciousness and to allow you to experience expanded states of consciousness while functioning on Earth. For this, it has a highly developed brain through which consciousness is processed and through which mind and body functions are maintained. But just as the average person's mind is clouded with conditionings and mental processes which screen consciousness, so the brain itself is often not as refined as it could be to accommodate expanded states of consciousness while involved in sense-related matters. Righteous living and Kriya Yoga meditation practice contribute to the restructuring of the brain so that its full potential can be utilized.

The human brain evolves through time and is acted upon by natural forces common to the material world as well as subtle and fine forces which are superconsciously induced by meditation and increased spiritual awareness. When a person is psychologically healthy and the brain is refined, soul awareness is easily processed and higher states of consciousness can be spontaneously experienced and expressed.

Yogic theory has it that given proper rest and nourishment and the most ideal, natural environment, Nature's influences act upon the brain and nervous system to regenerate and refine it. Inadequate rest, a diet deficient in needed nutrients, and the stress and strain of inharmonious living, challenge the brain and nervous system, im-

pairing its efficiency. Also, when most of the available soul force is used to repair the body and its organs, which are often overly challenged because of unwise living habits, a reserve of radiant soul force is not accumulated for the purpose of restructuring the brain and nervous system at deeper levels. When all environmental conditions are ideal, the natural processes of evolution refine the brain, allowing for natural but slow soul unfoldment. Cosmic forces as well as solar and lunar influences also act upon the brain and body. Teachers in the Kriya Yoga tradition assert that every 28 days the nervous system is refreshed in relationship to the lunar cycle. Further, cosmic forces from a "power source" in the galaxy also act upon the electrical properties of the mind, contributing to its purification and allowing for gradual increases in perceptual abilities. The average person is mostly at the mercy of his own behaviors, wise or misguided, and the evolutional influence of his environment, immediate and more cosmic. However, by intentional living and Kriya Yoga meditation practice, evolution can be quickened. We help ourselves by intentional actions and we contribute to the refinement of the brain and nervous system when we meditate and introduce superconscious forces into the body. Also, by directing available life force through the chakras and into the higher brain centers we can accomplish in a relatively short period of time what Nature would otherwise accomplish over a period of hundreds or thousands of years.

This is not to assert that all we have to do is learn to meditate properly and use Kriya Yoga meditation techniques. We must also continue to live correctly, to engage in self-examination and make every conscious effort to help ourselves in every way to be open to the universe and allow life's purposes to be fulfilled. The path of Kriya Yoga, then, is for the totally committed devotee of God. I have known many persons who were initiated into Kriya Yoga procedures who have not experienced obvious spiritual growth. The major obstacles have been lack of self-confidence, lack of vision, lack of aspiration, lack of will (conscious intention), lack of self-discipline, failure to comprehend what is studied, and inability or unwillingness to surrender to God. Such people want to merely improve the human condition but do not want to be enlightened.

It is because many religious aspirants are not willing to choose the way of total commitment on the spiritual path that Mahavatar

Babaji counseled Lahiri Mahasaya to carefully select his disciples. There is little use in sharing advanced spiritual practices with persons who either cannot comprehend their value or who will not appreciate and utilize them correctly. Over the past several decades, an increasing number of receptive truth students have been sincerely looking for a direct way to God-realization. For this reason, these teachings are now being made more available. But the same conditions for transmission of the teaching remains: a seeker must be receptive to learning and willing to practice.

Intentional practice of meditation routines and intentional living in the way we know best causes desired changes in our lives. Your daily meditation routine not only opens your consciousness to the Infinite, it anchors your life and keeps you steady on the spiritual path. Without daily prayer, without daily meditation, awareness tends to be dominated by random thoughts and shifting moods. Attention tends to be attracted to sensory urges and to unnecessary external involvements. Daily inward turning during meditation regulates the outward flowing tendency of the mind and results in natural self-discipline of thoughts, senses, and behavior. This is why I strongly recommend that you meditate on a regular schedule even on those days when you are not particularly inspired to do so. Especially at such times, you need the uplift, the calming influence of meditation.

Just as regular meditation anchors your life, so intentional living keeps you on course, improves ability to use creative powers and weakens and overcomes destructive and nonuseful unconscious and subconscious tendencies. Intentional living and doing things in new, creative ways opens new pathways in the brain and increases brain capacity and mental ability. You will become more alert, more conscious, more capable, as a result of intentional living. You will learn to live with purpose the kind of life you want to live, the way you are meant to live.

Notice that in the description of Kriya Yoga (*Yoga Sutras* 2: 1) "self-discipline for the purpose of regulating sensory impulses" is mentioned first, followed by study and surrender to God. Study, surrender to God and everything else we might want or, need, to do are virtually impossible without a degree of self-discipline. And self-discipline is easier when we have intentional purpose in life. When purpose is a motivating factor, thoughts, feelings and actions are

then synchronized so that purposes can be fulfilled. Thoughts, feelings and actions which are not compatible with purposes are regulated or avoided. Purposes are fulfilled with minimum effort and factors which were formerly influential are renounced and their influences weakened and eliminated. Kriya Yoga is the rapid way to spiritual growth and the actualization of purposes because God-consciousness is more quickly realized by superconscious meditation and our lives are more easily ordered by intentional living.

The sooner God-realization and ordered living is actualized, the sooner can we live as conscious, free beings and participate in the cosmic drama of unfolding life. Our own spiritual freedom, our own wellness and soul radiance, then beneficially influence planetary consciousness and contribute to the spiritual awakening of other people. Just as our thoughts, feelings, and states of consciousness comprise our personal psychological condition, so the collective thoughts, moods, and states of consciousness of the global population comprise the collective psychological condition. The condition of collective human consciousness determines social conditions, personal interactions and our relationship to the planet. Therefore, there is nothing you can do that is more important for yourself and others, than to facilitate your spiritual growth and live righteously.

What will it matter though you have fallen by the way, if you reach your journey's end safely at last? God will forgive the falls: they are often caused by undue haste, which prevents us from taking fitting precautions, or with timid souls from a perpetual looking round for imaginary dangers which cause them to stumble. Perhaps the holiest men are not always those who commit the fewest faults, but those who have the most courage, most love, and the most free spirit; those who make the heartiest efforts for conquering self and who are not afraid to stumble, even of a fall, so long as their progress is certain.

JEAN NICHOLAS GROU (1731-1803)
The Hidden Life of the Soul

Lifestyle Guidelines

WAYS TO WELLNESS, HEALING AND RADIANT LIVING

If wellness is to be experienced, we must be open to the nurturing influences of God and God's universe. If healing is to be experienced, we must believe in the possibility of being healed and cooperate with laws natural and divine which make healing possible. If radiant living is to be experienced, we must be relieved of all restrictions to its expression.

The majority of causes of illness and death are preventable. Most illness, most psychological distress, most accidents, most personal problems of any kind are self-inflicted; therefore, knowledge of causes of distress and their removal is helpful to the healing process. There can be other influential factors involved but these, too, can be discerned and successfully handled. Some common causes of impaired function are as follows:

1. *Lack of Spiritual Awareness* – This is obviously the most common because if one were sufficiently aware the connection between causes and effects would be easily discerned. Attitudes, behaviors and relationships with destructive potential would then be avoided. Lack of spiritual awareness results in a deficiency of knowledge, illusions due to misperception, and unconscious mental processes and behaviors. A spiritually unaware person is as though hypnotized—his attitudes, mental processes and behaviors are con-

ditioned by illusion, confusion, desire and habit. This mostly unconscious condition is common to the majority of human beings on Planet Earth today. We can see it by the lives they lead, the thoughts and attitudes they express, the behaviors which are most dominant and where their interests lie—what they consider to be most important to them. Their major concern, if improvement of any kind is desired, is to improve the human condition so they can be more comfortable and accomplish their egocentric purposes. They often feel themselves to be victims of circumstances, unable to do very much to help themselves. They have unlimited potential but do not yet know it. They need to experience spiritual awakening and spiritual growth.

2. *Psychological Causes* – Our consciousness is processed through the mind and the mind is the seat of emotions. When there are mental and emotional conflicts, the flow of consciousness is restricted and difficulties can result. These can be: problems relating to other people and the environment, neurosis or psychosis, or physical illness. Some psychological problems are supported by misinformation, which results in faulty thinking and impaired ability to function. Some problems are due to emotional distress, guilt, regret, envy, loneliness, fear, trauma, memories of past failure or rejection and a host of other contributing factors. Psychological imbalance is sometimes caused by stress, biochemical imbalance or toxic poisoning. Whatever the cause, its influence can be reduced and eliminated.

3. *Karmic Causes* – One's karmic condition includes unresolved conflicts, traumas, desires and compulsions, attitudes, beliefs, reactive patterns because of past experience, acquired attitudes and behaviors—everything that influences us from within. Constructive karma can be allowed to actualize; destructive karma should be weakened and eliminated. Destructive behaviors can be replaced by constructive ones, creative mental processes can be used to cause desired effects and higher realization can result in an improvement in powers of reason and determination and, finally, to being released from karmic influences so that spontaneous right action and God's grace can prevail. Karma is not of the soul, it is of the mind, fine (causal) and subtle (astral) sheaths and physical body. Wherever there is distortion or restriction—there are causes of possible difficulty. Guidelines to freeing ourselves from restricting influences are found in the *Yoga Sutras* (2:2-10):

> **Kriya Yoga is practiced to weaken and eliminate all physical and mental obstacles, for the purpose of realizing God. Restricting influences which contribute to pain and suffering and prevent God-realization are illusions about the nature of God and the nature and purpose of life, egoism, attachments, aversion, and conflicts about the processes of birth and death. Imperfect perception of the Real is the field of all restricting influences, whether these be dormant, somewhat expressive, or fully expressive. Ignorance is assuming the non-eternal as eternal, the impure as pure, the painful as pleasurable, and ego as the real Being. Egoism is the appearance of identification of the soul with the mental field. Dwelling on pleasure produces affection for it and attachment. Being repulsed by that which may contribute to pain produces aversion. The urge toward death exists along with the inclination toward life, even in the wise. These urges are propelled by their own innate drives. These five restricting influences should be overcome by resolving them into their subtle origins.**

By knowing the causes of restriction and their subtle origins, we can free ourselves from them. This is the message of the seers.

4. *Genetic and Basic Constitutional Causes* – Inherited tendencies, predispositions and conditions may be restrictive, as may an unbalanced psycho-physiological constitution. Balancing the basic constitution is usually relatively easy, by adhering to regimens described in earlier Lessons. Some inherited conditions may have to be allowed, but can be compensated for and their influences minimized. Do not accept the verdict that you are impaired, disabled or dysfunctional because of inherited conditions or circumstances of accident after birth. Realize that you are a spiritual being and learn to use your creative abilities and soul faculties. Many inherited conditions can be improved or overcome if will and knowledge are more influential. The physical body is constantly being regenerated. Every year you have a new body, as cells are replaced and vital forces circulate. Inherited tendencies are easier to change if the choice to do so is made and one's lifestyle provides for spiritual and psychological growth and the manifestation and maintenance of physical wellness.

5. *Accumulated Stress* – Normal, mild stress is not harmful. When a problem is presented, stress results until the problem is

solved. When a challenge is confronted, stress results until the challenge is met. When desire manifests, stress results until the desire is satisfied or discarded. These are examples of normal, mild stress-causing incidents and if we are functional we can live with them. However, when stress accumulates and tension increases, problems can result—perhaps mental confusion, emotional unrest, physical discomfort, tiredness, sleeplessness, depression, resorting to alcohol or other substances, overeating, undereating, disruption of routines, difficulty in relationships, difficulty in handling memories and emotions, difficulties in making decisions, apathy, neurosis, psychosis, high blood pressure, headaches, backaches, skin rashes, failing eyesight, and a variety of other symptoms for which no organic cause may be satisfactorily diagnosed.

Extreme stress can be self-generated by worry, anxiety, morbid preoccupation with thoughts, feelings or circumstances, or because of an unhealthy lifestyle. Environmental influences can contribute to stress buildup—loud noises, discordant music, unpleasant conditions in general, and even the hearing of bad or threatening news. If what we perceive challenges us beyond our means of reasonable tolerance, it can contribute to an accumulation of stress in the body. When the nervous system is overstressed it has difficulty in processing information and we suffer. Further, when the nervous system is overstressed our consciousness cannot as easily be processed, thus our psychological and spiritual growth is also restricted.

Regular, correct meditation practice is the most convenient and useful way to release stress. Obtaining adequate rest, choosing a nutritious diet, learning to maintain a calm, dispassionate outlook on life and avoiding possible sources of environmental discomfort are also useful.

6. *Environmental Influences* – Disease-causing bacteria, viruses and other infective microorganisms to which the body's immune system has little or no defenses, chemical poisons, certain metals such as lead, electromagnetic radiations of various kinds, and other substances foreign to the body may contribute to illness. Even normal light filtered through color tinted windows and sunglasses which have lenses other than clear or grey tint are believed by some to contribute to biochemical imbalance. When their presence is suspected, most environmental sources of contamination can be avoided or guarded against. Not always so easily avoided, because

seldom considered to be threatening, is "mental poison," the result of hearing and reading negative comments and misinformation. The exercise of discernment is the best defense against this.

Wherever there is less than unrestricted function and expression, healing is necessary. Spiritual healing, to eliminate lack of knowledge is of primary importance. The ideal is to be spiritually aware, mentally acute, emotionally balanced, physically healthy and vital, on friendly terms with the universe and everything in it, to be clear about purposes and to prosper in all ways—to thrive, to flourish and be successful in doing and experiencing everything worthwhile. "Holding the line," "putting up with," and "just getting by" is not the way of a resolved, courageous devotee of God. Further, to avoid the possibility of future problems, even subtle and fine causes, including those which are presently repressed or dormant, should be eliminated as they represent seeds of potential discomfort and pain. This is the intention of dedicated Kriya Yoga devotees, to remove all restrictions.

There are two ways to approach the healing process and they should be taken together. One is to do the inner work to clear consciousness and mind of any supporting influences. The other is to actively do something of a practical means, if a way is known, to influence change for the better. Most outer problems have inner supporting psychological equivalents. When these are cleared, outer conditions change. Self-analysis and adjustments of attitude, thinking, feeling and believing will be extremely helpful. *Direct realization of the nothingness of a problem and the reality of its solution is the highest way, but is not always easy to accomplish.* Inner work and outer practical procedures will result in improvement and improvement will inspire confidence to continue. Our self-esteem improves when we see evidence of success and the mind responds to positive feedback.

In conversations with many patients who experienced dramatic recovery from serious illness, it was found that most of them had a "peak experience" prior to the healing process. They reported that for one reason or another and often in spite of evidence and opinion to the contrary, they felt clear-minded, serene and absolutely certain that they would be restored to health. The vivid realization preceded the healing.

One wellness-oriented medical doctor reported of a personal challenge. He had helped hundreds of seriously ill patients to be restored to wellness as a result of a regimen of education, meditation, visualization, nutrition and other therapy routines. The foundation ingredient in the process was desire to live and belief in the possibility of being well. Yet, for every 100 seriously ill patients to whom he presented the option of self-responsible involvement for the purpose of getting well, only about 25 percent would agree to even try the program. Besides the fact that some sick people do feel weak and defeated, the major obstacle seemed to be that even sick people are not always willing to consider the fact that they have choices and that they can, if they decide to do so, change their lifestyle and change their circumstances. But, many reasonably healthy people also find it difficult to make such choices.

Why do human beings often persist in thinking, feeling and behaving in ways which are not only self-limiting, but destructive? Why do some people find it so difficult to choose the better way? Is it habit? It is willfulness? Is it fear of the unknown? It is fear of what others will think when they change? Is it a not-so-unconscious death wish, a desire to be completely unconscious and withdraw from life altogether? This is a bottom-line question—why is it, when we know better, that we do not do better?

Right Understanding and Right Realization

Regardless of the personal challenge, outer symptoms, conditions and circumstances are but evidence of deeper causes. If we know the cause of a present problem and know how to eliminate it, we should. But to prepare ourselves to approach the solving of any problem and to maintain wellness and function, we should regularly attend to the matter of continual right understanding and right realization of our spiritual nature and our relationship with the Infinite.

Until we are permanently established in inner realization, we should maintain our supportive routines, study truth literature, meditate regularly and do our best to live from the clearest level of consciousness possible. Whenever attitude and states of consciousness need to be adjusted, do this:

Be still. Remind yourself that you are a spiritual being, made in the image and likeness of God as a ray of reflected God light. As such, you are already perfect, complete, well, knowledgeable and free. You are pure consciousness, pure existence not subject to modification or change and forever what you are. Contemplation of this fact will result in right understanding. Actual experience of this fact will result in right realization. With right understanding and right realization all things are possible. Be absolutely convinced of this at the soul level. So long as there is doubt, your understanding is at the mental level. Go deeper until there is no doubt, only certainty. This is realization. Function from this level.

From this level we see all possibilities, no restrictions, the insubstantial nature of conditions and circumstances. From this level we can readily accept any possibility for ourselves. If changes in circumstances are required, we have only to see ideal circumstances and accept them. If desired conditions require help from us to be caused, we have only to add an impulse of gentle will, mild intention. When we are firmly settled in realization, life's natural inclinations will cause circumstances to unfold appropriately for us.

Healing of the body is an entirely personal process. In the arena of relationships and creative projects, besides maintaining right understanding and right realization we will have to be appropriate to circumstances, learn to get along with people and learn to do the practical things we need to do to perform our duties. In other words, follow-through requires commitment and attention to necessary details.

The same practical things we do to maintain wellness can restore wellness if a challenge should occur. If a wellness routine is maintained, difficulties will not arise except under special circumstances. The body's immune system will be strong, internal processes will function harmoniously and radiant health will be natural. Proper attention given to all areas of living—spiritual, mental, emotional, physical, relationships, and purposeful living—will ensure orderly unfoldments and total life-wellness.

God's radiant life works directly through us, as well as through the agency of other people and the forces of Nature. We should learn to accept God's supportive influences in every provided way.

Omnipresent Spirit, help me to gather my inner powers and realize your Reality. The universe is projected from You through the cosmic sound current and is sustained by You. You are transcendentally omnipresent with the cosmic sound current. Help me to realize your Reality inwardly and outwardly. Awaken now my dormant soul powers. Rouse my infinite energy. Lead me on to the perception of Your glorious light.

INSPIRED BY PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA

Cosmic Meditation

EXPANDING AWARENESS IN GOD'S CONSCIOUS LIGHT

In the Kriya Yoga tradition a variety of meditation techniques are provided to encourage devotees to experience inner perceptions and assist them in becoming more cosmic conscious. While contemplation of the field of pure consciousness is considered the most direct way to enlightenment, supplemental techniques can be helpful in assisting the meditator to expand awareness and more easily remove attention from physical and mental restricting influences. One such procedure—expanding awareness in God's conscious light—was taught by Paramahansa Yogananda and often emphasized by him when instructing groups in the practice of meditation.

While a mental visualization process during the early stages of practice, successful use of the technique can remove attention from psycho-physiological processes and enable the meditator to more easily exercise intellectual and intuitive abilities to contemplate subtle, fine, and transcendent levels of manifest consciousness. When practicing this technique be reminded that you are not to indulge in fantasy or remain at the level of mental visualization; rather, you are to eventually rise above mental operations and move awareness into superconscious levels of perception.

This technique can be used for interludes of contemplation other than your usually scheduled meditation sessions, as well as during regular meditation sessions after you have practiced preliminary techniques and rested in the silence for a duration. For instance, after sitting in the silence for a while, you may feel inclined to more actively engage in intentional contemplation. This would be a useful time to experience the "expanding awareness in God's conscious

light" technique. Proceed as follows:

Look into the spiritual eye and visualize a medium-blue ball of light. If you cannot actually clearly visualize it, just imagine that you are seeing it. Feel this blue sphere of light to be conscious. Let your consciousness identify with it until you can imagine that you are this sphere of conscious blue light. The consciousness-frequency of God's universal manifestation as guiding intelligence is blue.

You may first want to contemplate inner sound when you begin the practice of this technique, then while absorbed in the sound contemplate the sphere of conscious blue light in the spiritual eye and identify with it.

As conscious blue light, begin to expand. With each inhalation, become larger, expanding like a balloon of consciousness. After a while, forget the breath and just mentally continue to expand. At first, as conscious blue light, fill the body. Then expand until you fill the room where you sit, feeling that everything in the room is contained within your consciousness. Continue to expand as conscious blue light until the dwelling in which your body resides is within your consciousness. Continue in this way, steadily, including your neighborhood, the region beyond your neighborhood, Planet Earth, the moon, the solar system, the galaxy, and all of the galaxies in almost endless space. Feel the universe to be floating in your consciousness.

Rest for a while at this stage, feeling yourself to be omnipresent at this universal level. Know that the physical universe is but the objective manifestation of subtle forces and fine cosmic influences. With your intelligence, discern the astral forces existing and circulating within the physical universe. Discern the fine cosmic forces regulating astral energies. Discern the reality of cosmic mind in which everything occurs. Discern the existence of primal Nature: the sound current, light particles, space and the field of time. Discern the Godhead, with attributes and cosmic forces. Behind the Godhead, discern the field of pure consciousness, the realm of existence, the source and sustainer of all outward expressions of itself. Continue in this manner until you experience the peak level of awareness for that particular meditation session.

As you proceed with this exercise you may, from time to time, forget to remain focused on the field of pure consciousness as the final

object of contemplation. You may, instead, become involved at other levels. Patient practice of this technique will enable you to eventually transcend all relative objects of perception and experience pure, unbounded awareness.

As God is Omnipresent,
the Soul is Omnipresent

The soul, being a ray of God's light reflecting in the field of Nature, even while unconsciously identified with mind and body is really as God is, omnipresent. Being sense-bound, most souls do not know of their omnipresence. Regular practice of the conscious blue light technique will help to restore your awareness to its unrestricted state.

It is often easier to experience a degree of expanded awareness while meditating because of having attention removed from mental processes and body awareness. Upon coming back to mind-body awareness the cosmic sense may become obscured. One reason for this is that we are not used to relating to mind-body processes while simultaneously being cosmic conscious. Also, the brain and nervous system may not yet be sufficiently refined to simultaneously process varied states of consciousness. As we become more proficient in experiencing expanded states, it becomes easier to maintain the cosmic sense even while functioning through the mind and body. As the brain and nervous system becomes refined and our astral awareness increases, the cosmic sense will become more pronounced and permanent.

Train yourself to think in a more cosmic way. Even while relating in appropriate ways on a day-to-day basis, inwardly know yourself to be an omnipresent spiritual being, a reflected ray of God's light, grounded in the Infinite. You may have some fantasies as you do this, but just be willing to renounce them as your intelligence becomes more keen and your intuition becomes more pronounced. You may, while meditating, have visions, superconscious dreams of an elevating character. Recognize them for what they are. Learn from them if there is anything to be learned, but do not cling to them or consider them to be ultimate perceptions. You may, at times, feel that you are telepathically in tune with souls which are embodied on Earth and with whom you share a common destiny. You may feel that you are similarly attuned to souls residing in astral or celestial realms. This

may be true, or it may be wishful thinking. Learn to discriminate between what is true and what is not true. Avoid fantasy and useless speculation. You are not unlike the saints and the gods and goddesses, the shining beings. Just remember their destiny is the same as yours: to awaken completely from the dream of mortality. Every manifest condition this side of the Godhead is mortal, is subject to change and dissolution, so do not become overly fascinated with such relatively temporary expressions of life. Even an epoch of a trillion years duration is a temporary expression of life when viewed from God's perspective. Even the most illumined saint, if not completely enlightened, is subject to evolutionary trends and the influences of cosmic forces. While honoring the gods, worship only God. While acknowledging all aspects of manifest creation, be anchored in the unmanifest field of pure consciousness.

During my early years of intensive spiritual practice I had many spontaneous experiences of alternative states of consciousness. I know what it feels like to be as small as a particle of light and as cosmic as the universe. I know what it is to perceive inner realms of consciousness and to have all possible spheres of manifest creation existing in my expanded consciousness. I know the difference between illusory perceptions and actual experience of higher realities. I know how it is to experience God in manifestation and God as a formless presence.

Everything can be known by the soul because knowledge is already present within its consciousness. This inner knowledge is accessible and by knowing what we are, we can know what God is. This is why mystics recommend knowing the true Self, the God-nature. Self-realization does not mean mere personality-realization, knowing why we behave as we do as human beings. It means divine knowledge with all of the unveiled capacities of the soul being fully expressive.

The Natural Results of Spiritual Growth are Revealed as Experience and Soul-Inspired Behavior

Constructive changes in experience and behavior are the natural results of spiritual growth. Improved circumstances and spontaneous righteous behavior often easily unfold. At other times, necessary changes occur and we may feel challenged. We may have become

accustomed to our circumstances and our habitual modes of behavior, finding in them a degree of security. But now, with soul influence becoming more obvious, we may discover that we have to make new decisions about lifestyle and learn more appropriate ways to relate to our world. After all, a more cosmic conscious person cannot continue in routines which are habitual to persons in conditioned states. A change in lifestyle may be required. At the very least there will have to be consideration given about how to more effectively perform duties and careful thought directed to the matter of whether or not our actions are entirely constructive and in line with our spiritual ideals.

By making right choices our spiritual growth is easier. By avoiding choices, spiritual growth can be inhibited. Or we may discover that life-changes occur which force us to adopt more conscious relationships and behaviors. As soul purity becomes more pronounced, our thoughts and actions will have to conform. (Read again the opening verses of chapter sixteen of the *Bhagavad Gita* for the characteristics of one who is living from divine consciousness.)

The *New Testament* references to the undesirability of putting new wine in old bottles or of sewing new cloth patches on old garments applies to our awakening experiences. We can live a secret life; that is, be outwardly appropriate to social situations when necessary while being inwardly God conscious, but we cannot successfully remain self-deceived by pretending to aspire to spiritual growth while resisting its transforming influences. Not only will harmlessness, truthfulness, honesty, energy-transmutation, non-attachment, purity, discipline, contentment, contemplation of higher realities, and surrender to God have to be given our attention, they will have to be allowed to spontaneously express as we become more conscious. We will have to allow our innate inclination to be compassionate, caring and generous in giving to be actualized. To attempt to live in former conditioned ways while our soul nature is increasingly inclined to new ways, will only result in psychological discontent and personal frustration. Divine tendencies cannot operate through us if we are not willing to allow them expression. Life cannot provide us with its bounty if we are not receptive to God's gifts.

And all of our higher abilities, as well as Nature's provisions, are gifts of God. They unfold and manifest to the degrees that we awaken and acknowledge them. They do not have to be "worked for," they only

have to be allowed to emerge into expression; just as our perceptions of higher realities are not acquired, but are made possible by adjustments in attitude and states of consciousness.

Because God-realization and God's grace cannot be earned, our understanding may have to be improved if we are to experience the spiritual growth we desire. That which we seek is already present, therefore available for the perception and acceptance of it. Spiritual awareness, mental competency, emotional stability, physical wellness, supportive relationships, natural abundance—these are all present for our acknowledgement and acceptance. All that is required, if these are not actualized in our lives, is for us to learn to see correctly and to accept what is our own.

There comes a moment in our spiritual growth experience when we begin to realize that our forever striving to attain or to accomplish has been misdirected effort—that we were endeavoring to reach a destination, to accomplish a purpose, instead of knowing how to be open to our available good. Learning to make that adjustment in attitude and inner realization, from "getting" to "having" is sometimes a challenge, because subtle. We may have been used to exerting physical force or learning how to apply mental influences, when all that was needed was a change in viewpoint, a different way of looking at life. And one of the most revealing changes in viewpoint we can have is to discover that our former concept of God was just that—a concept, a mental consideration—and that God is not at all what we formerly believed God to be. Revelation provides for us knowledge of God that cannot be had by any intellectual process, and when God is revealed to us in full measure our lives will never again be the same.

Shibendu Lahiri and Roy Eugene Davis (center, back) and American CSA members visiting the Lahiri Mahasaya Temple at Benaras, India: January 1991.

Personal Comprehension Review

Use this review opportunity to improve your understanding of the Lesson material and facilitate your practice.

1. Read pages 64-81 in *Life Surrendered in God* to acquire a better understanding of cosmic time-cycles.

2. What is the definition of the Greek word *psyche*?

3. What is a constructive way for one to eliminate psychological conflicts which interfere with actualized behavior?

4. Why did Mahavatar Babaji counsel Lahiri Mahasaya to carefully select his disciples?

5. What are some common causes of impaired human function?

6. What is the highest way of healing?

7. Why are you, at a deeper level, already perfect, well, knowledgeable and free?

8. Practice expanding awareness in God's conscious light during your next meditation session.

9. What can you do to train yourself to be more cosmic conscious?

10. Review your major lifestyle routines to see if they conform to your ideal of what is most desirable and useful for you. Make improvements where needed.

Reflections

What is it that all the world is seeking? And what is it, whether in the midst of activity or during our quiet moments, that we desire above all else?

We have only to inquire at the heart of us, at the level of being, to know that above all else what is desired is peace—not merely the cessation of outer disturbance or a degree of psychological rest but deep, soul awareness and satisfaction grounded in conscious experience of the Infinite. This is what the world is seeking, what every person earnestly desires and what is presently available to us when we turn to the source of life itself.

The peace we desire cannot be known by any contrived effort of our own or by the most humanly conceived ideal relationship or circumstance. We can, of course, help ourselves to a degree of outer comfort and inner order—to arrange circumstances to suit our personal needs and to acquire a degree of psychological balance, but soul peace can only be experienced when we resign ourselves to the inevitable fact that impermanent conditions are incapable of providing permanent, soul-satisfying peace. Only by consciously turning to God can we be restored to the security of blissful equanimity. Soul bliss is the supreme happiness and delight experienced when the soul's awareness is removed from external supports and is established finally in the realization of pure consciousness. That rejoicing, then, is not attended by any emotion but is the pure delight of unrestricted soul awareness.

"I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep:", the psalmist wrote*, "for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety." Established in soul peace, grounded in God consciousness, we are secure. We are responsible for our outer relationships, for our behavior and for ordering our thoughts and emotions, but the real basis of security is

**The Book of Psalms* 4:8

our conscious relationship with the Infinite and this is possible when we know who we are and what God is.

And how do we experience this peace that is not "of the world," that is not supported by anything outside of ourselves? We experience it by surrendering in God, by letting go of our attachments and dependencies and by accepting the fact that surrender in God is the final act that alone determines a spiritually favorable outcome. Everything else we do to help ourselves, if appropriate, is useful as preparation for final surrender. This is why devotion to God is recommended by all enlightened masters, for all of our practice of techniques and all of our righteous endeavors cannot do for us what devotion to God can do. Paramahansaji often said that "devotion to God is more important than meditation techniques" and more important than efforts to live a disciplined life. Not that meditation techniques are not helpful and that self-discipline is not necessary—because they are—but that personal efforts alone are not sufficient without devotion, without love of God.

If devotion to God is not spontaneous, it should be cultivated. Since we cannot love what we do not know, it is necessary to learn to know God by studying what saints have revealed about God and by contemplating the reality of God until God is understood as God really is.

God is not only real, God is knowable and can be experienced. The more the reality of God is contemplated, the more that ego-sense is surrendered, in like measure is God self-revealed in our consciousness. During the revelation process, which may be experienced in stages or in dramatic episodes of redemptive discovery, it is well not to presume that partial insights represent the allness of the full measure of God. God cannot be confined to mental conceptions or to observed intuitive insights. God can only be comprehended when awareness transcends mental processes and there is no longer any sense of apprehending the field of God. Complete God-realization results in complete experience of God, while any conclusions arrived at by reason or intuition are only partial perceptions of the whole.

The Obvious Helpfulness of Surrendered Prayer

Prayer is an act of conscious communion with God. A Christian might pray to God as the heavenly Father, as the transcendent Spirit

removed from relative spheres yet accessible to the soul. God may be prayed to as the omnipresent Being, the Oversoul from which the worlds emerged and in whose consciousness the worlds exist—as our mental states exist in our own consciousness. God can be prayed to as the all pervasive Divine Life, transcendent as well as presently existing within us and around us. Since we are specialized expressions of God consciousness, surrendered prayer is a soul to God relationship. Therefore, we can talk with God, mingle our thoughts and feelings with God, desire to more clearly know God, and experience a moment-to-moment awareness of God.

Prayer should not be thought of as an occasional interlude of communication with God but as an increasingly real, conscious relationship with God. While contemplative prayer may be experienced during private, intentional devotional sessions, such surrendered prayer will also result in a conscious awareness of God's presence throughout the day—so that during our routine activities awareness of God remains constant. Our thoughts, feelings and behaviors are then more effortlessly directed in ways which are righteous, in ways which are correct and appropriate. As a result, we become fearless, compassionate and spontaneously virtuous. We are naturally inclined to live constructively and in ways most useful for the unfoldment of higher purposes.

There may be occasional challenges that arise as a result of our deepened prayer life, for inner changes will occur which may be contrary to habitual modes of thinking and behavior. Welcome such occasional challenges, for they are evidence of the transforming power of prayer. They are signs that inner transformation is purifying the mind and removing restricting conditions which formerly influenced consciousness and behavior in nonuseful ways. The more deeply you go into God, the more obvious will be your spiritual growth. You will continue to function in spacetime but you will awaken to timelessness, to eternity. You will continue to live in the world but you will not be of the world. You will enjoy relationships and creative activities but you will not be attached to changing circumstances.

As a devotee of God you are destined to lose your sense of separate self and know only the reality of God. With this, there will be no diminishing of personal reality but only an increase of conscious awareness. You will be removed from the illusion of unknowing and permanently settled in omnipresence. Everything will be spontane-

ously revealed. With God-realization everything about God is directly apprehended. Before God-realization our intellectual conclusions about God are partial, mingled with assumptions and acquired information. My wish for you is that you experience the fullness of God during your present Earth sojourn, while you are alert to the possibility and informed of how to allow it.

It will be a happy day for you when you awaken completely to the reality of God—and you will. As I write these words I am not merely sharing thoughts, I am putting my spirit and God's life into them. Therefore, as you attune your soul consciousness with the spirit behind these words you are being divinely influenced to directly realize your highest good. From now on you will never be the same personality again—you will continue to unfold your innate capacities because the spirit of God in and as you will see to it.

As you continue on your destiny path, feel the reality of God shining in your mind, directing your thoughts, arranging your affairs, and expressing flawlessly through your actions and unfolding events. This is how to live the God-realized life.

Choose Divine Companionship
Enjoy the Fellowship of the Saints

God is your larger Self, so walk with God as you go about your daily rounds. Train yourself to be aware of God's vibrant presence within you, as you, and around you as everything you sense and experience. Feel God thinking your thoughts, feeling your feelings, expressing as your relationships and circumstances.

God is also expressing as people you know, some of whom may be saints as yet unrecognized. Whenever you see a person or think of anyone, inwardly acknowledge, "I behold your divinity." Learn to attune your mind with the pure thoughts of enlightened souls who share this world with you. In this way, be mentally refreshed and continually inspired on your awakening path.

You are in this world to learn to allow the radiance of God to be glorified through you. God's light will shine to the degree that you let it. Even now it is increasingly manifesting through you.

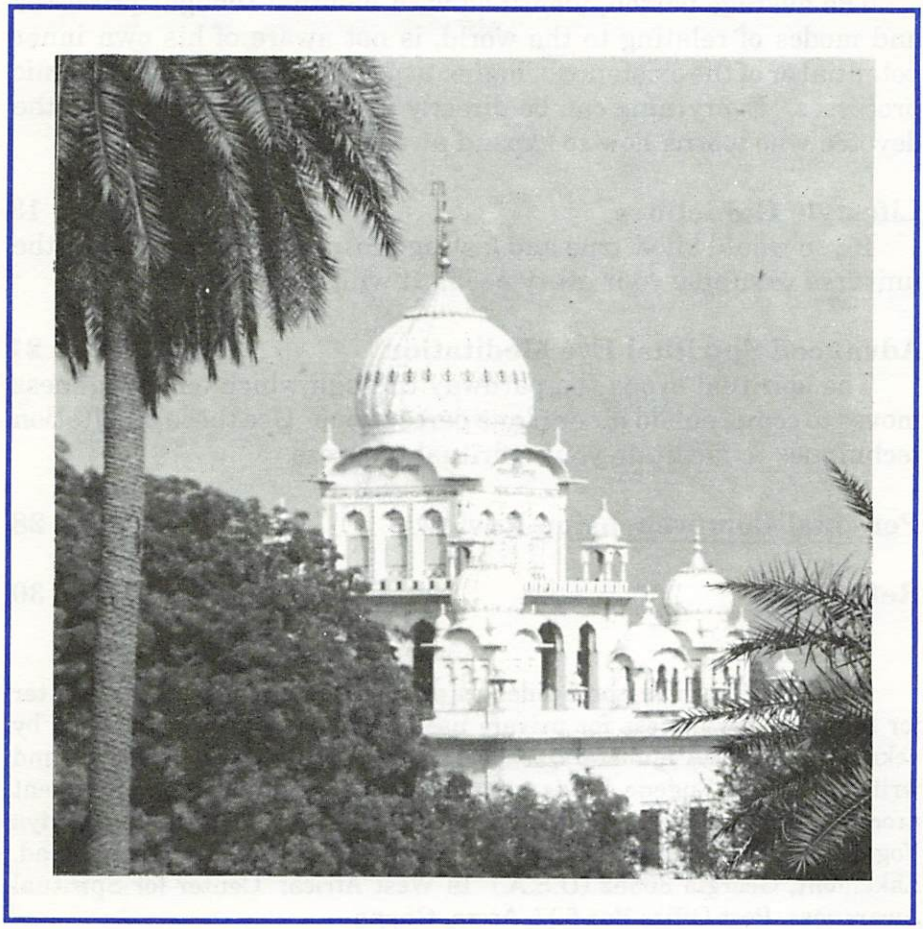
– Roy Eugene Davis

CENTER FOR SPIRITUAL AWARENESS
STUDIES IN TRUTH LESSON GUIDE
MASTER COURSE NUMBER EIGHT

92

Exploration of Higher Realities

THE UNIVERSE IS REFLECTED IN THE BODY OF MAN



When concentration, meditation, and superconscious perception are simultaneous, this is perfect contemplation. As a result of mastery of perfect contemplation the light of direct knowledge dawns in the mind. Perfect contemplation should be practiced to experience ever higher states of consciousness. *YOGA SUTRAS 3:4-6*
Life Surrendered in God

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Studies in Truth Lesson Guides are published and distributed by Center for Spiritual Awareness for private use and guided study supervised by acknowledged CSA ministers, teachers and group leaders. Prepared and written by Roy Eugene Davis as an examination of the enlightenment process, with emphasis on the traditions, philosophy and practice of Kriya Yoga. Center for Spiritual Awareness, Post Office Box 7, Lake Rabun Road, Lakemont, Georgia 30552 (U.S.A.) In West Africa: Center for Spiritual Awareness, Post Office Box 507, Accra, Ghana.

The spiritual eye is located between the eyebrows. Within it, there is the eternal source-point, brilliant as the autumn moon. The devotee, by knowing this, is never pulled down from his high state of consciousness. This is the great light known only to those who know it. By contemplating this, one obtains the highest success.

SIVA SAMHITA

Within the light of the thousand petalled lotus is revealed Reality, Absolute Being. It is self-luminous, pure consciousness. It is the light of lights. It is the supreme Reality known to the Self-realized.

MUNDAKA UPANISHAD

Exploration of Higher Realities

THE UNIVERSE IS REFLECTED IN THE BODY OF MAN

Male and female human beings comprise the species of man. While all other creatures possess varying degrees of intelligence, human beings have the most highly evolved brain structure and the most efficient interrelationship between consciousness, mind and body. Man can review his history, use imagination to alter his relationships with his environment, depart from instinctual living and create new patterns of behavior at will, and ponder the meaning of life and his place in the universe. Knowing himself to be a spiritual being, man can learn to separate his consciousness from body and mind and explore subjective realms.

Because knowledge of consciousness is within us, and because we are specialized units of consciousness, awareness of ourselves as consciousness and knowledge of everything about consciousness can be known. Knowledge about consciousness is not confined to our specialized field of awareness; that is, we are not limited to knowing only about ourselves. We can also know everything about the processes of the universe from gross to the finest levels and we can know about the categories of cosmic manifestation, God, and the unmanifest field which is the origin of everything this side of it. The entirety of the nature and processes of consciousness can be known by exploration of higher realities by concentrated inner contemplation.

You already know, because of having meditated, how to turn

attention back to the source of life within your body. Your own life force comes into the body at the medulla center of the lower brain. As it enters it divides to manifest as dual polarities, positive and negative currents. Flowing first to the brain, it then flows down to animate the body. When life force flows mostly downward, along with attention, awareness is identified with the body, senses and objects of the senses. Man then becomes forgetful of soul reality and does not know how to again become aware of it, much less explore subtle inner realms of manifest Nature. God is forgotten, as well as the field of cosmic mind and causal and astral spheres. While it is of practical value to be sufficiently related to the material realm in order to function intelligently in it, such intelligent function does not have to mean that we cannot also be aware of higher orders of reality. In fact, knowing of them, and having access to them, provides us a more cosmic understanding of our role in the universe and enables us to live with greater purpose as a result.

Many people experience spontaneous episodes of partial transcendence, during which they are able to glimpse higher realities. They then know of possibilities but seldom know how to help themselves prepare to experience higher realities at will. They do not know that they could do this by meditative contemplation, by turning attention inward. Objective reality is perceived through the five senses; subjective realities are perceived intellectually and intuitively—intellectually, when observing them and determining their characteristics; intuitively, when they are directly known and experienced.

Kriya Yoga meditation techniques are taught to enable the devotee to consciously restore attention and life force to the higher chakras so that physical and mental distractions are transcended and perfect concentration can be experienced. In this way, subtle and fine perceptions may occur. While it is useful to perceive these perceptions, it should be remembered that all perceptions are to be transcended if pure consciousness is to be experienced. Since you are, as a spiritual being, pure consciousness, it is possible to know your reality as that. In one of his commentaries Lahiri Mahasaya wrote:

> By sincere practice of Kriya Yoga meditation, one attains the state wherein he realizes that all objects of the senses are but manifestations of consciousness. He is no longer attached to

them and attains inner wisdom and enlightenment.

When the waves of consciousness are transcended by sincere meditation practice, consciousness, being purified, experiences oneness with the Supreme Self. Thus the manifested world, the seeker's consciousness and Supreme Consciousness are experienced as one. The one Supreme Consciousness is manifesting as three, and appears to be three so long as egoism remains.

When memory is purified, samadhi (superconsciousness) is experienced. When the feelings of memory are dissolved, the stable state of samadhi is realized. In that state of consciousness the manifested world appears as a mere shadow to the seeker as he realizes its essential nothingness.

The inner realization of the true Self is achieved only in the pure state of samadhi, which is absolute freedom from thought processes.

When the seeker attains inner wisdom, inner realization of the true Self through samadhi, the attention is poised in inner wisdom and cannot go outward to form attachments.

When inward awareness is dissolved in the very Source, the true Self, then the perfect state is experienced and the seeker attains eternal tranquility, true liberation.

The righteous practice of Kriya Yoga meditation, that is, surrendered practice without anxiety for results, leads to liberation of consciousness. Unrighteous practice of Kriya Yoga meditation, that is, with attachment to results, brings inner enjoyment which, when it ceases, causes the seeker to turn back to his previous state, with its attachments.

All perceptions and visions are secondary. Whatever appears must disappear, hence, it cannot be permanent. Truth is eternal realization.

Removing ignorance by dissolving egoism is the only way to attain absolute knowledge. The aim of practicing Yoga is to dissolve egoism, removing the cause of ignorance.

When the seeker dissolves his mind in its source he attains inner realization. When he attains the state wherein everything is perceived as one, the seeker is then attuned with eternal realization.

When the seeker is established in samadhi, his practice becomes natural and spontaneous. In that state he does not have to practice with effort. Effort is released, and without even practicing Kriya Yoga meditation techniques he enjoys the benefits.

> Listening to the inner sound, the seeker actually sees gods, seers and sages of the past in the spiritual eye.
>
> When the seeker transcends the awareness of meditation and is stable in inner awareness, which is similar to the void but full of bliss, he has reached the true state of samadhi.
>
> There is absolutely one Self which is the ultimate existence. The seen is nothing but the reflection of the seer. The ultimate Self is the source of all.
>
> When the yogi harmonizes his breath and experiences tranquility, his consciousness becomes calm by the practice of Kriya Pranayama. The influence of nature-born qualities are transcended. Then the seeker experiences the fullness of God, enters into oneness with the inner true Self and eventually with the ultimate Self. This is the highest state one can attain, which is eternal realization.

An intellectual understanding of the process of cosmic manifestation enables us to somewhat understand that everything is consciousness. However, when thought processes are stilled, enabling us to experience our true nature as a specialized unit of consciousness, we are able to actually realize that everything is "one thing."

Once, when I was visiting a saint in India, he materialized in his hand a variety of things for persons present. Turning to me, he said, "Everything is 'one thing.' Do you agree?" By knowing that consciousness alone is real, he can manipulate fine forces of Nature by intention and manifest objects instantaneously. Below the level of the atom is the quantum field in which fine cosmic forces reside. A unit of cosmic force may be ten thousand to one hundred thousand times smaller than an atom. At this level, cosmic forces which are not yet matter have the potential to manifest as matter. It is at this level we can work to help ourselves, by merely intending for desired changes to occur in our environment.

We should not think in terms of superimposing anything upon our consciousness in order to "become more spiritual." All that is needed is to remove from our consciousness the present restricting influences. When this is accomplished, all that remains is pure consciousness. Lahiri's comment about superconsciousness being the result of memory being purified, refers to being able to meditate without having disturbing influences of memory interfere with concentration. When "the feelings of memory are dissolved," the meditator is

sufficiently detached from them so that emotional changes do not occur as a result of memories surfacing in the mind. Tranquility is experienced when all mental operations are stilled.

When concentration is no longer disturbed by mental fluctuations and life forces are directed to the spiritual eye, a clear white light "brilliant as the autumn moon" may be seen there. It is "known only to those who know it" by experience, otherwise it is a perception yet to be known. Paramahansaji taught me how to see the clear light by looking deeply into the spiritual eye. When seen, it fascinates the meditator's attention and thus easily keeps it internalized. If mental influences are present when the inner light is viewed, visions can result, which are sometimes partial superconscious perceptions mixed with subconscious impressions, the influences of memories. Thus, the possibility of illusory perception exists. Even if what is seen is undistorted astral or causal perception, or perception of more subtle cosmic forces, these should likewise be renounced in favor of contemplation of pure consciousness. Nothing this side of pure consciousness is permanent. Even perceptions of "gods, seers and sages," while of interest, should not distract the meditator from the ultimate purpose of meditation.

The Importance of Progressive Learning for Success on the Kriya Yoga Path

Kriya Yoga procedures are taught in a systematic way so that a sincere devotee will be able to learn basic matters first—including the philosophy upon which practice is based, how-to-live routines, and preliminary meditation methods. With a reasonable philosophical understanding one then has an intellectual foundation as well as a vision of possibilities. By living correctly, harmony with the environment and inner peace can be established. Preliminary meditation methods, to balance the body's forces and learn to concentrate, prepare the devotee for advanced stages of meditative contemplation. Without philosophical understanding, a supportive lifestyle, and at least some experience in calming mind and body for the purpose of meditation, it is difficult to experience superconscious states. And if sometimes experienced, it may be difficult to maintain them unless a degree of knowledge and inner calm is present.

Many people who have good intentions and sincerely desire a relationship with God, either have not had the benefit of learning

about the nature of God and cosmic processes, or their study has been shallow and their comprehension minimal. Likewise, many who aspire to higher realization have not yet learned to be self-responsible for living with purpose. They are confused, emotionally unsettled, lacking in discipline and purpose. They are unhappy and hope that higher understanding will make them happy, yet are not willing to help themselves to reasonable soul contentment which could be theirs with a little philosophical and metaphysical study and some attention honestly given to living a more regulated life. Our approach is to encourage people to learn to function where they are, with their present level of comprehension, and inspire them to improved function and higher understanding. In one year an intentional seeker should make satisfying progress. In two or three years more obvious progress should be apparent. In ten to fifteen years one should be stable in understanding and steady on the enlightenment path.

These teachings and procedures cannot be completely learned in a few weeks or a few months and certainly not during a weekend or week-long seminar experience. Intensive study and practice in a supportive learning environment can be helpful, but it is in the arena of daily living, over a period of time, that knowledge unfolds and transformation occurs. Some people come to me expecting to learn enough, during a week or a month, to enable them to teach others. This cannot be. We cannot teach what we do not know and we cannot know what we have not experienced. Outer guidelines can be shared, of course, but the inner work is a matter of nonverbal sharing of conscious realization and the transmission of spiritual force. After over forty years of ministry service I am still learning. Paramahansaji ordained me to teach when I was twenty-one years of age, not because I knew everything but because I was surrendered enough to represent the Kriya Yoga tradition and was willing to learn. When I went to my guru for training, I went with a discerning mind and a pure heart. I did not have many illusions and was not egocentric. My only desire was to more completely realize God and do God's will. And even with the most ideal conditions in the beginning, it has taken conscious attention to detail to fully explore spiritual possibilities.

An obstacle to spiritual growth for many people is that they want to hold onto the old ways of thinking and behaving while learning of higher realities. But this is not possible. Thinking and behavior must

be allowed to change, to conform with progressive unfoldments of understanding. If the lower nature does not change, the higher nature cannot express.

Even if our behavior is constructive, if we are living unconsciously, or under the spell of illusions, our spiritual growth is restricted. Conscious living without illusions, is essential to spiritual growth. It can be shocking to learn, as we increase in understanding, that many of our beliefs and convictions were based, not on fact, but upon wishful thinking, and that many of our concepts about God and higher realities were faulty. Yet, it is the removal of our awareness from these incorrect assumptions that results in liberation of consciousness. Consciousness is liberated when it is no longer inhibited by such errors in perception.

We can somewhat liberate ourselves by choosing to renounce illusions, faulty thinking and nonuseful reactive patterns as we become aware of them. In other words, we do not have to wait until we experience full illumination of consciousness before helping ourselves to a considerable degree of increased awareness and improved function, the result of consciously releasing known restricting influences which can be discarded. It is a common belief that well over one-half of our current potential is untapped because we don't do things the things we could do to function more effectively, and not because we do not have the ability to do so. For example, priorities could be established, better use made of time and resources, wise choices in diet could be made daily, a routine allowing for a balance of activity and rest could be adhered to, an intentional study program could be followed, daily meditation could be practiced, we could refrain from idle talk and we could choose our social activities for intentional purposes. None of these things require illumination of consciousness. They only require choice. Yet by making wise choices stress could be avoided, work could be accomplished more efficiently, more energy would be available, the mind would be better organized, and total wellness and spiritual growth would be encouraged.

How would life be for you if you were "spiritually advanced?" How would you live if you were enlightened? What would you do differently? What would you do intentionally? Stir up your creative capacities and begin to see yourself as you would be were you enlightened, then do your best to live like that.

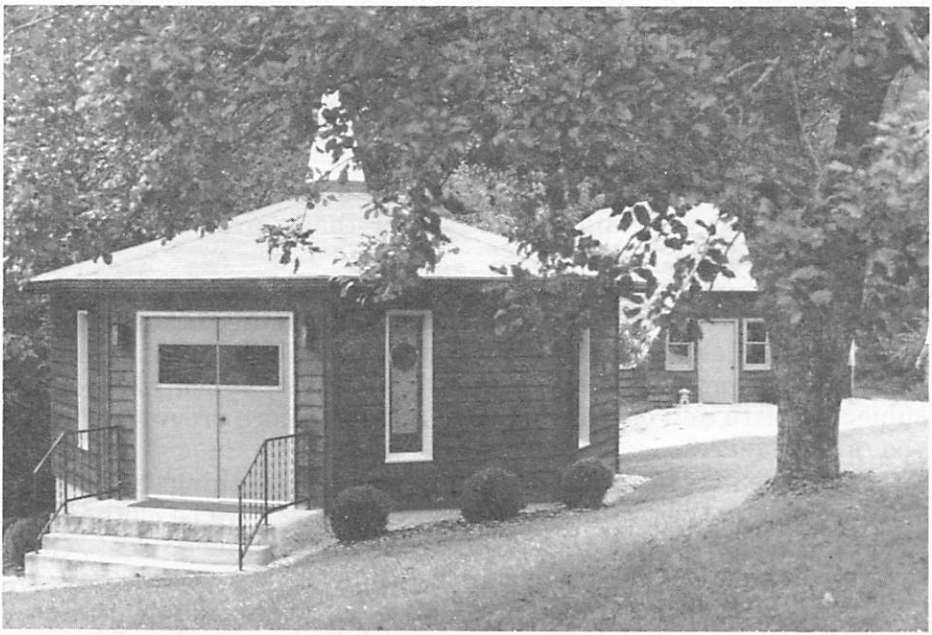
Further, what are you willing to do to contribute to your spiritual

growth and liberation of consciousness? Are you like the merchant man in the parable told by Jesus, who was willing to sell all that he had to purchase the "pearl of great price?" Spiritual growth is the most important factor in your life. With it, everything else will be improved. Without it, circumstances will prevail. It is not uncommon that when a person is prepared to literally go to the ends of the Earth to make the right contact or experience the right episode that can make the difference, that one discovers that whatever is really needed is close at hand. While we sometimes have to extend ourselves, to learn and to come into contact with spiritual growth opportunities, more often than not the universe has ways of meeting our needs right where we are. This is because the universe is self-referring and self-maintaining, and can make any necessary adjustments to fulfill purposes.

When you are centered and established in soul awareness, you are at the center of your universe. When you close your eyes and look into the spiritual eye, you can see at a distance in this realm and you can peer into subtle and fine realms. Whatever you want to see can be reflected in the spiritual eye. And the adjustment from conditioned consciousness to pure consciousness is but a matter of assuming a higher point of view—of looking from the vantage point of being a spiritual being instead of a conditioned one, of being divine, instead of only human. When your awareness shifts from body-mind identification to the experience of pure consciousness, right where you are you are established in the awareness of your real Self, as existence. Everything found in the cosmos is within you. The cosmic forces are within you. Heaven, fulfillment, is within you. God is within you, as you.

For centuries, man has dreamed of traveling to distant areas of the galaxy and to other galaxies. Interplanetary travel is already a possibility within our solar system but the distance to the far reaches of our galaxy and other galaxies is so great that time is a limiting factor. However, inner vision can make possible the viewing of regions anywhere in the universe, when the skill is acquired, just as inner vision makes possible the viewing of astral, causal and celestial realms. While a yogi is interested in practical matters for the purpose of satisfying normal curiosity and improving mankind's circumstances, the major interest is in exploring inner realms to move through them to the field of God and the field of pure consciousness.

Even a little experience with spiritual eye perception and higher states of consciousness will remove anxiety about eventual transition from the body. You will know the existence of inner spheres and of the reality of God and be a true citizen of the universe. This side of final transcendence you will be conscious of your immortality. You will not then be content to live a conditioned life, to believe as unenlightened people sometimes believe and behave as they sometimes behave. Your major concern will be continued spiritual growth and final liberation of consciousness while, in your relative relationships, you will see through appearances to compassionately contribute to the uplift of the world.



Lay not up for yourselves treasures in this world, where they can be corrupted or taken from you.

But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven (your consciousness of higher realization) where they are removed from the possibility of corruption or loss.

For where your treasure is, there will be your true concern also.

The light of the body is in the eye: if your vision is focused on important matters, your whole life will be full of light.

No one can serve two masters: for one will be preferred over the other; one will be hearkened to and the other less influence. You cannot serve a higher cause while being attached to a lower one.

Therefore, take no anxious thought for your life, about what you shall have to eat, or what you shall have to drink; and do not be overly concerned about having clothing. Is not your consciousness of supply, because of your knowledge of God and acknowledgment of abundance, sufficient to meet all of your needs?

Behold the birds of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor hoard food; yet Nature provides for them. Are you not more conscious than they?

Which of you by thinking can cause your body to grow taller?

Why are you overly concerned about being clothed? Consider the flowers in the field, how they grow; they do not do so by extreme effort.

So if God provides for the grass of the field, which like you is subject to birth and death, shall God not even more provide for you, you of little faith?

Therefore take no anxious thought, saying such things as, "What shall we eat? or, what shall we drink? or how will we be clothed?"

For after all these things do even the unenlightened seek. God knows you have need of these things.

But seek first the knowledge of God and a relationship with God, and be in harmony with the processes of life both natural and divine; and all these things will be provided you.

Take no anxious thought about the future, for the future will be taken care of by providence. To be overly concerned about day-to-day matters results in self-centeredness which restricts the flow of grace.

Paraphrase of *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew* 6:19-34

And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not. *THE OLD TESTAMENT*
The Book of the Prophet Isaiah

All that I have is the Lord's; not mine to
give or withhold it;
His, not mine, are the gifts, and only so
far can I make them
Mine, as in giving I add my heart to
whatever is given.
HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW (1807-1882)
Collected Poems

Lifestyle Guidelines

THE BASIS OF TRUE AND LASTING PROSPERITY

Paramahansa Yogananda often said, "He is the wisest who seeks God. He is the most successful who realizes God." True and lasting prosperity must be based on our relationship with God. God is the source of all outer manifestation, as well as the manifestation itself.

Our working definition of prosperity is "to thrive, to flourish, to be successful in all ways." *All ways*, refers to every aspect of our lives, including material wealth. To maintain the body and accomplish our worthy purposes we need resources in relationship to need. The universe, being self-complete, provides resources in whatever form needed. We only have to learn how to acknowledge this and accept the gifts of the universe. This is the spiritual approach to prosperous living. Because the universe provides resources in whatever form needed, we do not always have to think of prosperity in terms of money, although money is often one convenient form in which resources manifest. Train yourself, therefore, to be able to accept the goodness of the universe however it is presented to meet your legitimate needs. Do not bargain with the universe and say that you will only accept its nurturing on your preconceived terms. Do not say that resources have to manifest in your life as money only, nor in ways other than money because you are too "spiritual" to handle it. When

we relate to the universe in any way, we are relating to the creative energy of God expressing as that to which we relate. Accept life's goodness, make wise use of resources, avoid waste, be generous in the distribution of resources for specific, useful purposes. How you relate to Nature is revealing of your states of consciousness and psychological states. How you relate to the universe is how you live your life. You may sometimes fool your friends and associates, and sometimes even yourself, but you cannot fool the universe.

Since the universe is already providing everything needed for our welfare and for the fulfillment of purposes in the relative spheres, if we are not in the flow of materials needed by us to meet our needs and accomplish our purposes, we have a problem. The universe doesn't have a problem because it is already self-complete. If we have a problem in relationship to having our needs met and in accomplishing our worthy purposes, the problem is rooted in our own mind and consciousness. So it is within ourselves that we will have to look for a solution.

I am fully aware of the fact that well over 60 percent of the global population of approximately 6 billion people are living in impoverished circumstances and that even in relatively affluent societies there are many people who are poor, a great number who are barely surviving and many who are prosperous. There is not always a direct relationship between material prosperity and spiritual awareness. There are poor people who are spiritually advanced and rich people who are spiritually impoverished. There are also poor people who are materialistic and rich people who are spiritually illumined. Likewise, there is no direct relationship between morality and material riches. Being good is no guarantee of material security although goodness has psychological and spiritual value. Being righteous, however, results in fulfillment in all ways, because to be righteous means to be in harmony with the laws of God and Nature. Hence the admonition (*The Gospel According to Saint Matthew* 6:33): "...seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things (whatever needed) will be provided you." *In these plain, direct words we have the key to true and lasting prosperity.* To paraphrase the scripture verse: "Seek first knowledge of, and a relationship with, God; and live in harmony with laws natural and divine, and everything in your life will unfold in divine order." It is the prosperity principle that can never fail.

A sincere devotee may say, "I am seeking God and I am doing my best to be righteous, but I'm still having problems!" Read the instruction again and note the implication that seeking means finding, or discovering, and this includes learning how to live in harmony with natural laws and the rhythms of the universe. Mere good intentions and personal effort are not sufficient. We must actually awaken to understanding and consciously participate in the creative process if results are to be manifested.

Any reasonably intelligent, able-bodied person can find or create a work situation and earn enough money to take care of personal needs. And any honest work is honorable. By "honest" I mean that the work we do should have constructive outcomes and should be a service to individuals and society. And it is perfectly all right, even recommended, to visualize material success, so long as one is not willful or self-serving, no one is exploited and social and natural laws are not violated. Just think in terms of worthy purposes and honest causes and effects. There is no need to tenaciously grasp at the world, nor to be averse to relating to it. The stuff of Nature is a grosser manifestation of fine cosmic forces which have their origins in the field of God. Just as you are here to do God's will, to play your role in the evolutionary process, so the universe is in manifestation for the same purpose. Cooperation with Nature, then, is the best approach.

Think in terms of service—not what you can get but what you can give—then learn to be open to the flow of life and your needs will be effortlessly supplied. To persons of limited understanding the instruction is sometimes given that "as you give, so will you receive." If this teaching helps people to be more open to life, there is no reason why it cannot be taught, to them. But there is a higher understanding. It is, "All that God is, is already available for the acknowledging and accepting." Giving to receive, is a way to learn to be open to the universe and to feel worthy of having. Giving does open our consciousness and enables us to help ourselves in practical ways, be of service to others and to get in the flow of life. It is still a matter of working at the level of cause and effect. If that is your level of understanding and the process works for you, work with it. Your understanding will gradually improve as your spiritual growth continues.

When we are fully spiritually awake, everything we are and do is our service to God. Until then, we need to learn to give. Giving

dissolves ego boundaries and rids mind and consciousness of inner restrictions which cause us to feel removed from a relationship with God and God's universe. With right understanding and right realization we experience our lives as God's life. We experience that we have everything and are in need of nothing. And out of our experience of having, on the relative level conditions are manifested as resources and circumstances appropriate to our personal needs and purposes.

You can give your way out of poverty and be affluent (in the flow). You can love your way out of loneliness and enjoy supportive relationships. You can smile your way out of moods and be happy. You can serve your way out of restricting circumstances and be creatively productive. You can surrender your way out of self-centeredness and be more universal and cosmic in outlook. You can pray your way out of any condition and know peace. You can meditate your way out of delusion and illusion and be enlightened. There is no useful experience you cannot have by learning how to move in consciousness from where you are to where you want to be.

The only thing that keeps us from consciously expressing our true nature is our ego-caused self-centeredness. Egoism is the sense of independent existence, apart from God. Egoism results in blind tenacity, grasping, holding on, clinging. Giving affords us the practical opportunity of learning to let go, of releasing, of expanding consciousness, of learning to be in the flow of life.

One person may cling to money and possessions, another to power and prestige, and others to sensory stimulation of one kind or another or to convictions, attitudes and behaviors. The problem is never really what appears on the surface, *the problem is attachment due to insecurity based on egoism.*

The meditative way to experience release from ego-caused attachments is to expand consciousness and surrender to superconscious states leading to higher realization. The visualization way is to mentally picture ideal behavior and relationships. The practical way is to be self-honest and self-disciplined enough to do what is right even though it may be difficult to do; to do our duty as cheerfully as possible.

Learn to "wear the world as a comfortable garment"—get along with it but don't be attached to the extent of being uncomfortable or having your effectiveness diminished. And certainly not to the extent of having your awareness dimmed and your spiritual growth re-

stricted. Don't "sell your soul" to empower your ego.

Your first duty is to support your aspiration to realize God. But on a day-to-day basis, you have a duty to yourself—to see to your needs so that you can do everything else without having personal limitations get in the way. Whatever other duties you have to family and society, these must also be correctly fulfilled. Whatever money you need for the accomplishment of your purposes should be acquired by honest means. If your needs are modest, then funds should be adequate to meet them, with a surplus left over. As a self-responsible person, even while trusting in the benevolence of the universe, you should make adequate provision for your future physical security and for the extra useful things you might want to do.

If you are not yet financially prosperous, learn to be. Paramahansaji used to say, "Prosperity is not always having what you want, but having what you need when you need it." It's all right to satisfy modest *wants* and to enjoy life, but also think in terms of real needs. This will help you make better use of your available resources. Put a ceiling on your personal desires and avoid extravagant spending. Live a simple, comfortable life and use your free time to further your education, become cultured, render service, and attend to your spiritual growth. It is spiritually limiting to be a slave to desires or to be bound by the necessity of having to expend all of our time and energy to keep body and soul together.

With some of your surplus money, support worthwhile causes. For a devotee of God the first priority should be to assist in the funding of spiritual education programs, because spiritual education is the most needed service in the world today. Therefore, give on a regular schedule as generously as you can to an organized enlightenment movement. From wherever you receive your spiritual education and encouragement, there you should give. Give freely, without any qualifications. An enlightened teacher doesn't need your money, but an organized teaching movement does require funding. Persons who benefit from the teaching should provide the funding.

Give according to your inner guidance to community charitable organizations, to assist persons in the community who have personal needs. However you may be benefited by community volunteer programs, help make possible their continued services. Support, also, according to your guidance, interest and means, cultural centers, libraries and other activities which may be organized for the

public good. In some instances your giving may not always be in the form of money. It may be that you can volunteer your services, serve on committees, and in other ways participate in contributing to the wellness and uplift of society.

If you are not presently in a position to give money or personal services, at least pray on behalf of worthy causes and pray on behalf of others. Use your imagination and learn to see the desirable and the possible and believe in the reality of it. Your personal dreams of higher good, unknown to others but known to God, can outwardly manifest in wonderful ways. Therefore, no matter what your present circumstances are, you have something worthwhile to share with planetary consciousness.

Learn to let life provide for your needs in practical ways. A man once traveled from America to India to seek counsel from a certain saint. During his conversation with the saint the man was asked, "What do you want?" He replied, "Enlightenment." The saint said, "No, what you need now is money." It was true, the man's business was floundering.

Of course, if we are not enlightened we need to awaken spiritually. Also, if we are having personal difficulties, these need to be handled. Remember the words of Mahavatar Babaji to a disciple, "Few mortals know that the kingdom of heaven (fulfillment) extends fully to this Earth plane." While it is good to envision desirable future possibilities, it is even better to see them manifested now, if now is when the need is present.

If present circumstances are not ideal for your purposes and immediate practical steps cannot be taken to improve them, open your mind and consciousness to possible-possibilities. In your mind's eye, see solutions to present problems. Expand your consciousness until you feel yourself to be attuned to God and inwardly accept fulfillment however providence wants to arrange it. To remain passive and restricted, asserting that confining circumstances are God's will for you, is nonsense. Don't be weak. Don't be a begger, manipulator or a thief. Circumstances do not cause people to behave in unseemly ways. Circumstances may provide the opportunity for improper behavior to be dramatized, but the seeds of such behavior are already present in the mind of the person who behaves like that.

No matter who you are, wherever you live or whatever your present circumstances, the laws of prosperity are available to you

and will operate flawlessly to the degree that you learn them and cooperate with them. This is true whether you live in a city, rural area or remote place, and regardless of political or economic conditions. There are no impossible circumstances because nothing is impossible to God.

What is needed in today's world are more devotees of God who are expressing prosperity in all aspects of their lives and who are willing to be appropriate examples of true discipleship. Obedient to their calling and shining examples of God's will, their spiritual heroism will be an inspiration to others and a vital, practical evolutionary influence on the planet. There is no higher, more spiritually fulfilling duty than that of rendering surrendered service. The opportunity is ever before us to play a conscious role in the drama of relative life. Doing so, anchored in God-realization, such souls express true and lasting prosperity because the light and life of God is glorified through them.

Write a prosperity affirmation for yourself:

My dread of death and birth came to an end
When the Lord in his glorious hue
Revealed himself to me.
His light shone within me
And darkness disappeared.
When I contemplated within I obtained
The rare gem of the Lord's Name;
In the wake of my bliss
All miseries fled away.
The jewel of my mind became absorbed
In the Lord's love within;
Whatever happens now, O Lord,
I accept as Thy will.
One who lives in Thy will
Merges in Thy grace.
Says Kabir: My sins have become ineffective,
And my soul is suffused by the One
Who is the life of the entire creation.

Born in Benares, India, of Moslem parents, Kabir is renowned as a poet-saint of the fourteenth century. He was a weaver of cloth, was initiated into meditation by his guru, and refused to identify himself by social class or religion. His spiritual practices consisted of service to others, devotion to God and meditation on the inner light and cosmic sound current. Of interest to Kriya Yoga devotees is that Lahiri Mahasaya confided to disciples that he remembered one of his previous incarnations as Kabir.

The forms of Consciousness are a hundredfold, a thousandfold (numberless), and are various in kind, shapes and colors. The whole universe is unified in Consciousness. But man cannot comprehend this, so (to make this perception possible) divine sight will be given to the soul.

Having thus spoken, Krishna (master of Yoga) revealed the Ultimate Truth to Arjuna, his disciple. Arjuna then perceived Spirt in all expressions; all divisions, spheres, dimensions and planes were seen to be expressions of the One. If the light of a thousand suns were to blaze forth in the sky, that might resemble the splendor of Supreme Reality. *BHAGAVAD GITA 11:5-12*

Advanced Spiritual Eye Meditation

CONSCIOUSLY EXPLORING INNER REALM POSSIBILITIES

With a foundation in meditation practice and knowledge of techniques and procedures, you can proceed to explore the possibilities of contemplating and experiencing subtle and fine realms of consciousness. From the sphere of God, through to physical manifestation, are planes of manifest consciousness in which cosmic forces are expressive and souls are participating according to need or inclination. These realms are accessible through spiritual eye perception. Beyond all realms is the Godhead and the permanent aspect of the Godhead is changeless existence. The manifesting energies of God make possible all realms, cosmic principles regulate all activities in all realms and grace is the redeeming influence throughout. Seven major spheres are described in yogic texts, each with a great variety of characteristics:

Seventh Sphere – The realm of God, the only Being and Substance of our universe. It is beyond primal Nature. It is described as being nameless, although many names have been used to refer to it. It is consciousness with the attributes of the three cosmic forces. It is the only Life, the only Power.

Sixth Sphere – The realm of the Holy Spirit, where the life of God manifests. It remains unqualified and unmodified. It is the sphere through which cosmic power flows into outer expression and through which souls, reflected lights of God consciousness, are attracted back

to the source.

Fifth Sphere – The realm of spiritual reflection in which the process of soul specialization, due to a sense of separation from the Godhead, occurs. It cannot be comprehended by the intellect because it is beyond the material realms, but can be directly perceived by intuition. It can be known by the soul but not comprehended by anyone external to it.

Fourth Sphere – The connecting plane between spiritual and material creation, referred to as the *door* to the higher realms. The light of Spirit, shining on primal Nature, produces the characteristics of which manifest Nature is formed (the influential creative force from higher spheres, light particles, space and time). This is the field of *maya*, the field of illusory processes.

Third Sphere – The causal sphere of electricities and magnetism. The realm supporting the two lower spheres of astral and physical manifestation.

Second Sphere – The astral plane of electric attributes and fine forces. The realm of life forces, prana. Mistakenly assumed to be "heaven" by many devout religious persons.

First Sphere – The realm of gross material manifestation perceived through our sense organs.

Further, the soul is covered by sheaths (sometimes referred to as "bodies") when relating to the outer spheres. The first is the seat of *feeling*, which makes possible relative enjoyment. The second is the seat of *knowledge*, by which determination is made. This is sometimes referred to as the basis of relative intelligence. The third is the mental field, or *mind*. The fourth is the *astral body* comprised of life forces and subtle organs of senses and action. The fifth is the *physical body*, nourished by food.

These sheaths are interpenetrated, the lower ones being discarded as the soul withdraws from their respective spheres of operation. For instance, the physical body is discarded when we depart this world and become active in astral spheres. The astral body is discarded when the transition from astral to causal spheres is made. The causal sheath is discarded when the soul no longer needs it. It is also possible to withdraw attention from these sheaths during meditation. Then return to habitual relationships with memories of inner plane experiences.

Just as there are galaxies without number in our universe, each with millions of suns and solar systems, so the astral and causal realms are similarly vast and complex. (And there is the possibility of other universes outside of our known spacetime continuum.) A billion solar years of exploration would not enable a person to become aware of all circumstances and possibilities in the lower spheres. Our galaxy alone requires light, at a speed of 186,000 miles per second, to travel 100,000 years from one edge to the other! Yet, the operations of mind and consciousness are the same where we are as they are in distant space and in other spheres. This is why learning how to live where we are, enables us to prepare to live anywhere.

While some curiosity about inner plane realities may be satisfied by meditation perceptions, the major focus of our contemplative practices is to transcend all relative spheres and experience unrestricted pure consciousness. To the degree that we do this are we able to function freely in this and all realms.

Preliminary Practices Before Using the Spiritual Eye Meditation Technique

You may already be proficient in inward gazing as a result of regular meditation practice. Just the same, it can be helpful to at least work with the following practices to improve your powers of concentration.

Steady gazing contributes to inward concentration. When observing someone who seems to be "lost in thought" you may notice that even with their eyes open they are staring straight ahead, oblivious of external conditions. Just as one-pointed concentration can result in automatic steady gazing, so intentional steady gazing can contribute to focused concentration. Such concentration is necessary when using the meditation technique taught in this Lesson.

1. *Steady Gazing with Eyes Open* – Sit quietly and look into the distance without specifically focusing on an object. Let your attention be inward. Notice how your breathing becomes refined and you become contemplative, more thoughtful and settled.

2. *Steady Gazing at a Candle Flame* – Sit in a darkened room, with a single lighted candle placed at eye level, three or four feet in front of you. Gaze at the candle flame for several minutes, until your

gaze is steady. Then cup the palms of your hands over your eyes, looking into the spiritual eye, and notice the after-image effect of light perception. This is merely a physical phenomenon, of course, but will accustom you to seeing light between your eyebrows. Play with the light. Notice that when you gaze steadily the light pattern tends to remain stationary, and when your gaze is not focused and intentional the light patterns change. Remembering this perception will enable you to more easily work with inner lights which manifest during meditation practice.

3. *Steady Gazing During Reverie* – After refreshing sleep, should you awaken and remain at the borderline between wakefulness and sleep, in a reverie state, look into the spiritual eye. If you do not try too hard, but just look there, you may observe various light formations—perhaps geometrical patterns which change, sometimes in brilliant colors; perhaps a "window" of light in a oval pattern, which seems to be a portal to other levels of mind and consciousness. You can, with practice, initiate a conscious dream episode by visualizing the beginning of a dream sequence. Or, you can remain conscious at the threshold between subconscious and conscious levels and more carefully explore possibilities. You may look into the spiritual eye and wish to see a distant event or location, then see it reflected in the spiritual eye. You may wish to remain inwardly still, awakening to superconscious levels of awareness and experiencing gentle transitions in states of consciousness. Until you acquire proficiency in practice much of what you perceive will have a dreamlike quality about it, and will in fact be predominantly subconscious in character. Still, such practice will enable you to become acquainted with deeper mental levels and the skills to adjust states of consciousness at will.

The purpose of the above procedures is to afford you the opportunity to be more conscious, master your attention and no longer be at the mercy of moods and emotional states which may usually determine states of consciousness and mental processes. Our ability to concentrate and be able to perceive what we want to perceive is directly related to our ability to consciously focus our attention. Self-mastery is impossible without self-control, without control of emotions and attention.

Practicing the Technique

Meditate in a quiet, darkened room. After you are settled and relaxed, look into the spiritual eye, *feeling yourself to be drawn into it.* If you can see a light there, let yourself be somewhat identified with it, retaining a degree of objectivity. The purpose for practicing this technique is not to completely merge in the light, but to move awareness through it into subtle spheres. If you do not actually see a light, visualize a circular light at the spiritual eye. Imagine this light to be a tunnel extending into inner space.

Feel yourself being drawn into this tunnel of light, which is your entry into subtle spheres. Listen to the sound current, knowing that its origin is the field of God. There are two ways to proceed and you may experiment with both of them.

1. *The Visualization Way* – Imagine yourself being attracted to the light, merging with it while remaining observant. Feel yourself to be one with the cosmic sound current and in tune with all of physical creation. Then, feel your awareness of identification with the physical level of creation to be receding as you become increasingly aware of the astral sphere, the realm of electrical properties and life forces. After a while, let astral awareness recede from your consciousness and feel yourself to become increasingly aware of the causal sphere, the realm of electricities and magnetic fields. Let your consciousness progressively expand as you do this. After a while, let causal awareness recede and expand into the field of primal Nature, aware of the sound current, the vastness of space, the field of time, and the existence of fine cosmic forces. Continue through this field to an awareness of your "I-ness" existing as a unit of pure consciousness at the edge of the sphere of unbounded, non-individualized consciousness. Contemplate the reality of the field of God. Contemplate the sphere of pure consciousness, existence. In the beginning, you will be aware that you are visualizing with intention. As you progress, you will discover that you are surrendered to the process and that meditation is occurring spontaneously.

2. *The Surrendered Way* – Looking into the spiritual eye, feel yourself to be surrendered in God. If you are an initiate, feel the spiritual presence of the saints and masters of your tradition. Just let your attention be drawn into the spiritual eye, listen to the sound current and surrender to the process. If you sit long enough, your

attention will become internalized. Life forces, instead of remaining involved with physical and mental processes, will flow increasingly upward into the brain, causing inner light perception and the manifestation of the sound current. Let God and the field of pure consciousness be your ultimate object aims of discovery. You may have spontaneous episodes of astral, causal and higher reality perceptions. Whatever is perceived, observe it and release it. Eventually—or quickly—you will experience serene, clear states of consciousness. Let the process continue until your meditation session runs its course, which may be twenty or thirty minutes, or an hour or more.

Do not be afraid to meditate in this way. Much of what you initially experience may be mental phenomena, due to emotional influences and life force movements; that is, emotional states and the activities of pranic currents in the body and mental field can agitate the mind. When emotions are settled, life forces are calmed and mental processes are stilled, meditation will flow without disturbance.

When attention is withdrawn from physical and mental awareness and you become aware of seemingly endless inner space and endless time, you are directly confronting eternity, the field out of which all outer manifestation emerges. You, too, so long as you are functioning as a specialized unit of awareness, are grounded in eternity and your relative perceptions and experiences are but fleeting episodes, conscious dream incidents. By understanding yourself to be a unit of pure consciousness, grounded in the field of eternity, you will be better able to relate to relative circumstances in ways which are most appropriate but without becoming overly caught up in the passing drama. By realizing yourself to be a ray of God's reflected light, you will be able to know your real nature as pure consciousness. You will be able to live in this world and fulfill your duties without being dominated by personality characteristics or circumstances of any kind. Being more cosmic conscious, former small-minded ways of thinking and behavior will be transcended.

Be Patient, Fearless and Surrendered in God

Allow yourself time to adapt to spiritual growth stages. If you are decided within yourself to awaken completely in this incarnation, you will. You will be more stable if you are loyal to your chosen spiritual path, if you meditate regularly, attend to your various self-care routines, do your conscious best to live correctly in all circumstances and are involved with purposes of lasting value. Remember, you cannot live a self-centered life and, at the same time, expect to become more cosmic conscious. You must live like a cosmic conscious person, while attending to practical matters in the right ways.

As a spiritual being you have nothing to fear on the awakening path. Life will take care of you. Just live a self-responsible, righteous life and everything will unfold in divine order. Always adhere to the basic guidelines for living correctly. Be emotionally mature. Avoid superficial behavior and relationships. Attention to duties will keep you grounded. Some misguided devotees mistakenly assume that being more cosmic conscious means they can just drift through life without being responsible for their thoughts, feelings or behavior.

As you become more aware of inner processes you may feel sensations which are new to you. You may feel a mild pressure at the spiritual eye, an awareness of subtle energies circulating in the brain, or obvious flows of force in the spinal pathway. These sensations are indications of changes taking place within you and are nothing to worry about. Do not let yourself be preoccupied with them. They are just side-effects of deeper transformative processes.

Also, with spiritual awakening, you will find that your ability to understand these teachings improves, that you are better able to discern the inner meaning of scriptures and the intentions of enlightened teachers. You will be able to recognize the mistakes you may have made in the past, why you made them and how to avoid similar errors in judgment in the future. Your innate knowledge will unfold and living will be effortless.

Personal Comprehension Review

Use this review opportunity to improve your understanding of the Lesson material and facilitate your practice.

1. Why is all knowledge within us?

2. What are some of the characteristics of samadhi (higher superconscious realization)?

3. Why must preliminary meditation perceptions be transcended?

4. What are some of the things we can do to somewhat liberate our consciousness?

5. What is the basis of true and lasting prosperity?

6. Write, in your own words, the essence of *Matthew* 6:33.

7. In what ways are you presently giving to life?

8. List the sheaths of coverings of the embodied soul.

9. Practice steady gazing as recommended.

10. Practice spiritual eye meditation.

Reflections

What is the major obstacle to success in meditation for one who is resolved to experience Self-realization? Only a little self-examination provides the answer—the major obstacle to superconscious awareness is the self-referring tendency of the mind to be almost continually involved with various processes and fluctuations.

Restless urges cause waves of influence to spread through the mental field, resulting in a mixture of thoughts, images and moods which obscure clear awareness. At the soul level, we are undisturbed. It is only when we are identified with the mind that our awareness is clouded by the mind's almost constant flowing currents. It is often difficult, then, to adhere to a chosen train of thought, to concentrate effectively, or to remove awareness from mental fluctuations and modifications—but this is what, as meditators, we are asked to do. We are advised to fix our attention upon a chosen ideal or object and to refrain from further involvement with mental processes. To the degree that we are able to do this, as we become more calm and mental processes are ignored, the contents of the mind become more refined and finally settle into a dormant condition. The mental field is then clear, contemplation of higher realities becomes easy and superconscious states can spontaneously unfold.

Remember the preliminary instruction in the *Yoga Sutras* (1:2): "Yoga (accomplishment) is the mastery and dissolution of the modifications of the mind." When mental modifications are dormant and we remain conscious, clear awareness is naturally experienced. Then, by removing awareness from ego-sense in order to experience being, Self-realization results.

All of our Kriya Yoga practices are for the purpose of removing inner obstacles to Self-realization. Along with their practice, we should also constantly enquire as to the source and reality of our existence. Who is it that observes, experiences and ultimately knows the truth? The body is not the observer, the experiencer or the

knower. The mind, by itself, is not consciousness. You, the immortal being, are the observer, the experiencer and the ultimate knower.

As you attend to routine duties observe your thoughts, moods and actions. By thus monitoring them you can also learn to regulate them if you so choose. By discerning yourself as distinct from body, mind and actions you will more easily be able to remain inwardly centered and even-minded regardless of what is occurring around you. You will then be able to more easily internalize your attention when meditating, to remove awareness from thought processes and feelings and concentrate upon your chosen meditation ideal.

Eventually, you will be so settled in soul awareness that you will know this sphere of relative phenomena to be real only in that it is a manifestation of finer cosmic forces. The world will exist for you but you will know its impermanent character. Your attachments to it will weaken and fade to nothingness. You can still have desires for experience but they will be "desireless desires," without power to dominate your life or to cause you emotional pain if unfulfilled. You can still enjoy relationships and activities but they will not be the important basis of your life.

Once having glimpsed, even partially, the reality of your true being, do not let it fade from awareness by becoming overly emotionally involved with mental processes and sense urges. Be superior to your mental processes and regulate sense urges. This is the foundation practice of Kriya Yoga.

Live Consciously in Eternity
You are Already Anchored in God's Life

Change your thinking...from having to connect with God to knowing that you are already living in the ocean of God. Instead of praying *to* God, pray *in* God. Instead of seeking God, contemplate the fact that God is around you as well as the very life of you.

Train yourself to constantly remember the truth about yourself, God and your life. Train yourself to live in ways which best reflect your understanding. This is how to live consciously in eternity. There may be occasions of forgetfulness, intervals of clouded discernment, but these are only temporary. As you patiently adhere to your practice, as you allow yourself to accept God's reality, you will know soul happiness and mental peace.

Consciously experience the moment for each interlude of *now* is when and where your life perception is. Just as the moment is perfect, so will all future moments be perfect.

– Roy Eugene Davis

CENTER FOR SPIRITUAL AWARENESS
STUDIES IN TRUTH LESSON GUIDE
MASTER COURSE NUMBER NINE

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Clearing the Channels of Perception

THE CLEANSING EFFECTS OF KRIYA YOGA PRACTICE

Like waves on the ocean, human beings play for a time, caught by the storm of delusion. The ocean, however, is all the time pulling, pulling. Sooner or later, all of them will have to be drawn back, to merge at last into the vast Ocean of Divine Love from which they came.

PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA

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Nothing keeps us from directly apprehending God but the inability to do so because of restricting influences in mind and body. To remove them, we should practice Kriya Yoga. Here are specific guidelines on the awakening path.

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Of all the ways available to the soul to enable it to experience a satisfying relationship with God, prayer is the most direct and useful. Surrendered prayer always results in gratifying outcomes. Here is how to pray.

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Path of God breathing should be learned as a preliminary practice to prepare the devotee for more advanced procedures. It is easy to learn and enjoyable to practice. Include this process in your daily devotional routine and learn to go more deeply into God consciousness.

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Studies in Truth Lesson Guides are published and distributed by Center for Spiritual Awareness for private use and guided study supervised by acknowledged CSA ministers, teachers and group leaders. Prepared and written by Roy Eugene Davis as an examination of the enlightenment process, with emphasis on the traditions, philosophy and practice of Kriya Yoga. Center for Spiritual Awareness, Post Office Box 7, Lake Rabun Road, Lakemont, Georgia 30552 (U.S.A.). In West Africa: Center for Spiritual Awareness, Post Office Box 507, Accra, Ghana.

We live in succession, in division, in parts, in particles. Meantime within man is the soul of the whole; the wise silence; the universal beauty, to which every part and particle is equally related; the eternal One. And this deep power in which we exist and whose beatitude is all accessible to us, is not only self-sufficing and perfect in every hour, but the act of seeing and the thing seen, the seer and the spectacle, the subject and the object, are one.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON (1803-1882)
The Oversoul

That God, which ever lives and loves,
One God, one law, one element,
And one far-off divine event,
To which the whole creation moves.

ALFRED LORD TENNYSON (1809-1892)
In Memoriam

Clearing the Channels of Perception

THE CLEANSING EFFECTS OF KRIYA YOGA PRACTICE

In the *Yoga Sutras* (2:2) is given the purpose of Kriya Yoga: "Kriya Yoga is practiced to weaken and eliminate all physical and mental obstacles, for the purpose of realizing God."

While many personal, practical benefits result from our conscious practices, the desired conclusion is to be God-realized. While all "physical and mental obstacles" have their basis in lack of spiritual awareness, various procedures can be utilized to clear the channels of soul perception and function so that physical wellness, mental acuity and spiritual growth can be actualized. With all procedures, results are to be determined by improved function and increased perception. What we do for intended purposes must be result-producing if our actions are to have real value. There is no reason to do anything if results are not forthcoming.

Kriya Yoga is the way of experimentation and experience. By actually applying recommended procedures we can test their usefulness by experiencing the results of practice. We may take on faith the words of a knowledgeable person, but personal benefits must be experienced if our faith is to be justified. Kriya Yoga, then, is for

persons willing to put into practice procedures which can be helpful for the achievement of goals and the accomplishing of clearly defined purposes. The cleansing effects of Kriya Yoga practice result in the clearing of the channels of soul perception.

The physical body is purified by natural means: by a natural food diet, hygienic measures, clean water, fresh air, sunlight, exercise, rest, and other practical procedures. *The astral body* is purified by emotional calm, patience, contentment, pranayama, Hatha Yoga practice, and superconscious meditation. *The mental field is purified* by constructive thinking and attitudes, superconscious meditation, prayer, mantras, and by contemplating the cosmic sound current.

The selection of pure environmental circumstances, the company of healthy-minded spiritual aspirants and continual practice of the awareness of the presence of God are also supportive to our purposes.

Measures taken to ensure physical wellness are within reach of almost any person. Not as easy to accomplish is clearing of the emotional nature and mental field, but it can be done. Pranayama practice and meditation are easily done because they require bodily participation. Emotions and thought processes are more subtle. Cultivate an even-minded attitude in all circumstances, remembering to remain centered and to maintain a degree of objectivity in relationships and behavior. Be content in your soul no matter what you are doing. Come to terms with emotional problems and solve them. Come to terms with memories and refuse to be unduly influenced by them. Memories are only impressions of past perceptions and can be viewed as information only. When emotions are aroused by memories of the past pleasant or unpleasant experiences, separate emotions from memory and in this way avoid being at the mercy of past events. This is a simple way to eliminate karma—mental causes of reaction. If you have made mistakes, forgive yourself. Sri Yukteswar said, "The past lives of all men are dark with the memory of many shames. Human conduct is ever unreliable until anchored in the Divine. Release yourself from the past and resolve to do better in the future."

Regular practice of superconscious meditation will contribute to orderly thinking and sufficient objectivity to enable you to view yourself in relationship with circumstances in a more objective way. Then follow through with intentional constructive attitudes and the cultivation of optimism, hope, faith and possibility-thinking. As a

spiritual being you are capable of being in command of your thoughts, feelings and behaviors. When disturbed, pray to God until you feel secure. Live consciously in the present and look forward to wonderful futures.

The four components of the mental field should be understood and appropriately related to. *Egoism* is the basis of the sense of individuality, the sense of existing as an independent being. It is the cause of the major error of the intellect, somewhat veiling it and making difficult our ability to determine our true soul nature. Egoism along with *feeling* causes attachment to thoughts, moods, emotions, and relationships of all kinds. The *mind* is the thinking organ, in which perceptions and concepts are processed. *Intelligence*, when clear, enables us to determine truth from untruth. When egoism is dominant, awareness is mostly unconscious, deluded. This is described as a condition of spiritual darkness. Total unconsciousness is the opposite of total conscious awareness. The purpose of Kriya Yoga practice is to clear the mental field so that mental obstacles no longer interfere with soul awareness.

We can remove attention from mental involvements by intention and by superconscious meditation, but if mental conditionings remain when our awareness returns to the mental field it will tend to again be clouded. When awareness is clouded, intellect is impaired, errors in perception are common, learning is difficult, and mental conditionings and habits tend to dominate our lives. So spiritual growth requires more of us than being devoted to God, living a decent human life, and attending to regular prayer and meditation. It requires of us that we do everything we can, at all times, to remain spiritually aware and come to terms with known limiting factors and eliminate them. It is while involved in daily routines that many otherwise dedicated spiritual aspirants fail on the spiritual path. They often tend to allow themselves to revert to conditioned modes of thinking and behavior during the course of the average day, thus remaining at the mercy of them. The result is that one copes, struggles, suffers consequences of past causes and present actions, and remains restricted by inner and outer circumstances.

Weaken ego by remembering your divine nature, by surrender in God and by intentional service. Purify the intellect by being willing to exercise discernment. Harmonize your feeling nature by being grounded in the Infinite and refusing to be attached to anything, or

to be averse to relating to life in constructive ways. Order your thinking by remaining calm and by choosing your thought processes, imaginal states, and internal conversations—the "inner talk" you sometimes allow to occur in your mind. *Choose a lifestyle which is entirely supportive of your worthy purposes and spiritual growth.* To attempt to be aware and well-ordered inside, while being inattentive and reactive in relationship to outside circumstances, will result in conflict. To be "double-minded" is to be unstable. Just as you cannot serve God and materiality at the same time, so you cannot be successful on the spiritual path by trying inwardly to be a saint while outwardly behaving in unseemly ways.

Routines to Contribute to Inner Balance and Deeper Cleansing

There are several simple routines you can include in your schedule that will reinforce your intention on the Kriya Yoga path, as well as result in beneficial effects. The ones here recommended are supplemental to the routines recommended in *Lifestyle Guidelines* and the meditation instructions included in this Lesson series.

1. *Alternate Nostril Breathing* – For more intentional cleansing of the pathways through which life forces flow, practice this procedure at least ten times prior to meditation. If you meditate twice a day, include this procedure with both sessions. After six weeks, or so, add another session of this procedure at noon. Alternate nostril breathing balances prana flows directly and is especially good for calming the mind and relaxing the body.

2. *Sleep Position* – Experiment with how you recline when you sleep. Sleeping on the right side inhibits the solar breath and cools the system because of the lunar breath being dominant. This is ideal for mental calm and refreshing sleep. Sleeping on the left side inhibits the lunar breath and heats the system because of the solar breath being dominant. This contributes to sensory stimulation, lighter sleep, and dreams. Sleeping on the back causes prana influences to be random, sometimes contributing to an imbalance of the body's governing principle characteristics. Sleeping on the back for extended periods of time is not recommended if one wants to regulate prana flows in an intentional way.

3. *Massage of Vital Points* – To contribute to balanced flows of

prana in the body, daily massage some of the vital points of the body. Use a small amount of sesame oil or olive oil. Do this before showering or bathing. Lightly massage the area between the eyebrows and forehead, the area just below the chest cavity, and the area about 3 to 4 inches below the navel. Then sit down and massage each foot, being gentle but pressing rather deeply to work out any tight or sore spots at the ankle joints, heels, toes, and especially the bottoms of the feet. The points are reflex centers which trigger prana flows in deeper areas of the body.

4. *Longer Meditation Practice* – If you meditate daily for a short period of time, once a week meditate for an hour or more. If you meditate once a day, meditate twice a day. If you meditate twice a day, add another short session at noon or just before going to sleep. Once a month, meditate for two or three hours. Remember to relax into meditation and avoid overt effort. Let your meditation practice be enjoyable.

5. *Daily Deeper Breathing* – At least once a day, or morning and evening, breath deeper than usual to cleanse the bloodstream and supply extra oxygen to the body. Do this outside or where the air is fresh. Inhale deeply, hold briefly, exhale, hold momentarily and repeat a few times. An alternate routine, one which is highly recommended, is to take a daily brisk walk, walking to the point of enforced deeper breathing for at least fifteen minutes. Feel that you are taking in vital force from the air you breathe.

6. *Vitalizing the Body with Cosmic Life Force* – Sitting or standing, with the finger tips of both hands gently massage the base of the skull. Concentrate at the spiritual eye while doing this, visualizing an increase of cosmic life force flowing into the base of the brain and spreading throughout your body. Do this for a minute or two.

7. *Feeding the Body with Light* – The universe is an electromagnetic phenomenon. The average human being perceives but a minute portion of the entire spectrum of energies, perhaps a billionth of the total. Light is electromagnetic energy, its photons having mass. Full spectrum light is essential to healthy body function. Light shining on the skin has influence, but especially through the eyes. Light received by the eyes influences the pineal gland in the brain and from there all of the other glands and the body's chemistry. A minimum of fifteen minutes a day should be spent out of doors, without glasses of any kind if possible. This need not be in direct sunlight, a shady

place will do. If sunglasses are worn, they should be grey tinted but not any other color as this will distort the light spectrum.

If it can be tolerated, the sun's direct rays should be experienced, either during a brief sunbath or while walking or moving about. It is known that lack of light can trigger chemical changes in the body, contributing to mental and emotional depression.

Sleep in a darkened room, as light can disturb the body's biological rhythms during the sleep phase.

8. *Be in Tune with Nature's Forces* – Learn to appreciate Nature's beauty and the cosmic forces expressing through Nature. Acknowledge all living things and be respectful of them. Walk barefoot on the grass and soil, touch trees and flowers, smell the variety of scents, feel the spiritual vitality coursing through all manifestations of life. Swim in fresh or ocean water and feel yourself to be one with liquid Nature. Go to the mountains, the desert, the seashore, and contemplate the vastness of the universe. Look into the night sky and expand your consciousness into infinity. Rejoice in the miracle of life.

While contemplating the subjective side of life, learn to be at home in the outer world. We purposely withdraw attention and awareness from externals so that contemplation can be undisturbed, but after inner contemplation learn to see the One Life expressing as everything you see and animating all forms. In this way you will be able to be simultaneously aware of the outer realms as well as the supporting inner spheres.

Towards Higher States of Cosmic Awareness

When, in deep meditation, you experience a degree of merging with the object of contemplation, union with that object is experienced. When contemplation results in awareness without an object, transcendent states are possible. Simultaneous awareness of the outer world is not usually possible with preliminary superconscious states, nor is it intended to be. However, as a result of regular transcendent states being experienced, you will be able to retain a degree of transcendental awareness when you come out of meditation. As a result of this, along with continued cleansing of the body and mind and refinement of the nervous system, you will eventually be able to function normally during everyday activities while being

aware of higher realities. This is the state of realization known as "spontaneous awareness of the truth of life at all times." You will then know at all times that "you are in God and God is in you" and "the world is in God and God is in the world."

What is desirable is understanding and appreciation of cosmic processes, not rejection of the manifest worlds. What is desirable, while embodied, is to learn how to let God be glorified through the body and how to live harmoniously with Nature's processes. Birth, relationships, love, creative expression, learning, psychological and spiritual growth, transformation and useful change, even transition from the body to higher states of consciousness and levels of expression—all, when in divine order, are beautiful to acknowledge and experience. It is a far more healthy-minded approach to look at life this way than to reject or disagree with its processes, because this is how its processes are. Acknowledging what is, is the most honest view of life.

What if you are doing the best you know, and spiritual growth seems slow? Then, are you really doing your best? Or are you pretending to be helpless? Do you always function at your optimum level? Are you as mature and self-responsible as you can be? Are you behaving as intelligently as you can behave? Are you ridding yourself of all self-limiting attitudes, relationships and behaviors? Are you thinking right, feeling right, living right, eating right, meditating right, giving right, loving right? Are you reading the right books? Are you surrendered enough? Are you better able to function now?

With the clearing of the channels of perception, abilities should dramatically improve. We should see and discern more accurately, make better choices, be more focused, more easily see possibilities instead of problems, and be more expansive and understanding. With spiritual growth the unable should become more able, the able, more functional, and the more functional, exceptional. Improvement is the only outer evidence of spiritual growth. We should become more calm, more compassionate, more insightful, healthier, more truly prosperous in every way as a result of spiritual growth. Remember the definition of prosperity—"to thrive, to flourish, to be successful in all ways useful."

Exceptional results of spiritual growth are detailed in the *Yoga Sutras* (3: 46-49) and are cited as indications of progress:

> **As a result of mastery over the elements one experiences the unfoldment of supernatural powers, perfection of body and mind, and understanding of the indestructible qualities of matter and energy. Perfection of the body consists of beauty, bright complexion, grace, strength, and adamantine hardness. One experiences mastery over the senses by perfect contemplation on their powers of cognition, inherent characteristics, pervasiveness, and influences. As a result of mastering the senses one has direct insight, can function independently of external sense organs, and has dominion over primordial causes.**

Primordial is elementary, original. By knowing causes of effects, causes of present unwanted circumstances can be eliminated and chosen causes established which will result in desired effects. When beset by problems of various kinds, we often know which course of action is best, but do not always take it. We often know what to do, but do not always do it. The major problem, then, is not our inability to know but our unwillingness to act. And even an adjustment in mental attitude is an action—perhaps the most important initial action because from it other useful actions follow.

A careful examination of the lives of most devotees who report their seeming lack of progress in accomplishing useful purposes, is not always that their attention to diet, exercise, study and meditation is lacking, but that their habitual mental states and behaviors are not always consistent with what even they consider to be the most ideal. Their paradigm, their self-view and view of the world, is limited in spite of their desire to experience expanded states of consciousness. Expanded states of consciousness can be experienced as a result of spiritual practices and these will contribute to useful changes in habitual mental states, but it is also useful to cultivate expanded states under ordinary circumstances. As we become stronger with exercise and more proficient with concentrated practice, so we become more spiritually aware by cultivating our spiritual qualities. Kriya Yoga is not all metaphysical study and meditation. It also includes the willingness to surrender egoism in favor of soul awareness and to engage in disciplined behavior in order to change nonuseful behavior and remove inner and outer restrictions for the purpose of realizing the true nature and character of God.

Whenever the hidden, the unfathomable, is experienced whenever the meaning of all things is felt and grasped, then it is either the devoutness of silence, that most intimate feeling of the living God, that deepest force of religious intuition and emotion, which takes hold of man, or, again, it is the uplift of imagery which is stirred up within him, the poetry which sings in prayer of the ineffable.

LEO BAECK (1873-1956)
The Essence of Judaism

May we meditate on the effulgent light of
Him
Who is worshipful, and who has given
birth to all worlds.
May He direct the rays of our intelligence
towards
The Path of Good

RIG-VEDA

Lifestyle Guidelines
HOW TO PRAY WITH RESULTS FOLLOWING

Prayer is communion with God, as in supplication, thanksgiving, adoration, or confession. Some metaphysicians, intent upon "using" the principles of causation, and some meditators, relying upon their knowledge and the practice of meditation techniques, neglect the easiest, most direct way to God-communion: that of surrendered prayer.

A man once visited a saint and asked for help. She asked him, "Have you prayed to God about the matter?" He replied, "I don't know how to pray. I've tried, but I don't feel comfortable doing it." She took him by the hand and said, "Oh, it's easy. Just close your eyes and say, 'Thank you, God, for your goodness.' "

When Paramahansaji led gatherings of devotees in meditation, he would instruct them during the early stages of contemplation, to pray, "Spirit of God, reveal yourself, reveal yourself, reveal yourself."

So long as we feel ourselves even somewhat apart from God, we should pray. We can pray in audible words, then quietly, then mentally, then as the heart's sincere desire for communion with God.

So long as we feel ourselves apart from God, we should admit our need for the intervention in our lives of a higher power, of the reality of God. To deny that we need to experience the presence and influence of God in our lives is to be supremely self-centered and willful. How can we be helped if we will not ask for help? How can we awaken from conditioned states of consciousness if we will not aspire to higher states. How can we ever hope to have our problems solved if we will not turn to the ultimate solution?

Cultivate the habit of thinking of God, experiencing the presence of God, communing with God, and talking with God. You can do this while you are attending to routine matters. With practice, eventually you will be attuned to God at all times, no matter what you are doing. Such communion with God does not take the place of meditation, for during meditation you have the opportunity to withdraw attention completely from outer conditions and rest in thoughtless, superconscious awareness of God.

Let us examine some various forms of prayer:

1. *Prayer of Supplication* – Supplicatory prayer is the act of making a humble and earnest entreaty or petition. It is "asking" prayer. We may ask for enhanced awareness of higher reality. We may ask for assistance in meditation and contemplation. We may ask for healing, for solutions to problems, for guidance, or we may ask on behalf of others.

2. *Prayer of Thanksgiving* – We have many things for which to be thankful. We should be thankful for the gift of life, for the opportunity to learn and to grow spiritually, and for the privilege of being of service. We may be thankful for our many blessings. It is always appropriate to express thanks—to acknowledge what is known and expressed. That which is acknowledged and appreciated becomes more vividly real to us. It increases in manifestation to the degree that we express thanks.

3. *Prayer of Adoration* – Do you love God? Do you love the saints? Say so, when you pray. God does not need to hear your words but your words, spoken or mentally impelled, awaken your devotion and purify your heart, your inner nature. The expression of love awakens our soul nature, stirs dormant soul forces, calms the mind, awakens intuition, and brings us into an intimate relationship with the object of our love.

4. *Prayer of Confession* – A common folk axiom is, "Confession is good for the soul." It is. It makes us totally self-honest, so that we can admit our shortcomings and our weaknesses and do something constructive to overcome them. To attempt to adopt a supportive lifestyle and cultivate spiritual growth, while ignoring obvious needs to do practical things to eliminate troublesome behaviors and circumstances is self-defeating. So, whenever you need to clarify your thinking and become focused on priorities, if you need to "talk it out with God," do so. You will experience emotional release, a clear sense of purpose and resolve, and an increase of energy.

When you pray, pray until you need pray no more. Then be still, rest in the silence and flow into meditative contemplation. If you are not inclined to meditate at this time, then "sit before the Lord" and wait. Feel yourself to be *in* God, as a bubble of consciousness in the mighty ocean of God. You will be renewed and strengthened. Take to heart the words of *The Book of Psalms* (91: 1): "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." You will be empowered of God, protected of God, blessed of God, provided for of God.

Learn to pray "in the spirit of God." When you sit for your daily interlude of contemplative meditation, pray, then meditate according to your inclination or formal routine. Be absorbed in the cosmic sound current, feeling yourself to be one with it. Then, if inclined to pray, do so. You are now consciously, more deeply into the awareness of God's life and your prayer. You can now ask for whatever you need, *knowing that you already have it.* If you pray for higher realization, surrender more deeply into meditation and let it unfold. If you pray for improvements or changes in outer circumstances, you will either be led to make the right choices and do the right things to assist the process or you will know when to do nothing outwardly, allowing the spirit of God to do the work, as it will.

After prayer, maintain your prayer conviction, your higher consciousness, and live out of it. "And all things, whatever you ask for in prayer, *believing*, you shall receive." (*The Gospel According to Saint Matthew* 21:22).

The Best Approach to Prayer with Results Following

If you have specific needs, there is no reason why you cannot pray to have them met. You may pray for wisdom to help yourself. You may pray for help in solving your problems or meeting your needs. For this, if you are sure you know what you want, and you are not being willful or self-centered, pray specifically for desired outcomes. If you need healing, pray to be healed. If you need guidance, pray for guidance. If you need understanding, pray for understanding. If you need moral strength, pray for moral strength. If you need help to resist temptation, pray for help to resist temptation. If you need more evidence of material abundance in your life, pray for the manifestation of material abundance even if you do not know how it can manifest. The universe has ways to answer prayer. Pray until you are settled in the consciousness, the conviction, that what you are praying for is an established fact. Then maintain that conviction and live by faith. Do what you feel led to do to be self-responsible in helping yourself. Be open to opportunity and unfolding circumstances that life will present to you.

It is a weak, small-minded person who asserts that we are not supposed to ask for what we need. We are supposed to be spiritually aware, mentally competent, emotionally settled, physically healthy, on good terms with the universe, and successful in all worthy ventures. So don't make excuses. Don't say, "Perhaps I'm not supposed to be happy and fulfilled," "Maybe God doesn't want me to grow spiritually and prosper," "Maybe I'm supposed to suffer the consequences of my karma," "Maybe my astrological signs aren't suitable for my improvement." You are made in the image and likeness of God and are meant to manifest the full power and glory of God. Examine that fact until you are very clear in your thinking and knowing about it. Then, proceed.

But what if you don't know what you want, or what is best for you, or what is best in a given situation? Pray anyway, but not for vague outcomes. Pray that God's will be done. Say, "God, I don't know how to choose, but I am willing to be responsive to guidance and to accept constructive unfoldments in my life," and really mean it. When you pray with conviction, expect things to happen, because they will! So, prepare yourself.

How Best to Pray on Behalf of Others

If someone comes to you and asks for prayer support, give it. If you want to pray for someone who hasn't asked for your help, do so. But in either instance, do not pray for specific outcomes. I know, this may be difficult to avoid if you have an emotional tie with someone, but often even they don't know what they really want, or what is best for themselves.

The person being prayed with does not have to be physically present. Where you are, God is, and where the other person is, God is. God is omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent. You do not have to visualize end results. You do not have to attempt to establish telepathic contact or send energy through space. All you need to do is meditate until you feel anchored in the awareness of the presence of God. Then, invite that person into your consciousness by simply acknowledging him or her. Share your realization of God in this way, until you feel inclined to conclude your prayer session. You will know when to conclude, because you will feel "it is done," and you will feel thankful. You need not repeat the process on behalf of the person unless you feel inclined to do so. If you do it right, once is sufficient. Let results unfold in divine order, in God's own time and in God's own way. Maintain the inner certainty that the activity of God's spirit is moving to handle the situation. It knows how to contribute to spiritual awakening (the great essential), inner transformation, and harmonious adjustments of circumstances. It knows better than you, what the real needs of others are.

Even if you could manipulate outer circumstances by prayer and visualization, you might become skillful at adjusting surface conditions but might still be functioning at the level of "mental magic" instead of from higher consciousness. A highly God-realized person can, at times, be led to intercede on behalf of another person to provide specific help to assist their spiritual growth. You will know when you are capable of doing this.

Many people ask if they should pray for world peace. Of course, it is always useful to pray for harmony and order. But, again, it is best to pray without being too specific. Don't try to change the mental states of world leaders. Don't try to prevent earthquakes. Above all, don't be frantic and anxious about anything. Always work out of the highest state of consciousness possible, sharing your inner peace

with planetary consciousness and believing in the purposeful intention of the evolutionary forces currently expressive. Do your part to be a New Era person. The more God conscious you are, the more obvious will be the flow of God-through-you. This is the most influential world blessing.

Also, do more than pray. Do more than maintain a God conscious state. Engage in constructive work, contributing to the spiritual education of others and nurturing society and the planet. The best way to contribute to manifesting "heaven on Earth" is to live out of the consciousness of God, by growing from where you are to cosmic consciousness, God-realization and full enlightenment.

How to Prepare for Prayer Response

The New England transcendentalist Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862), a contemporary of Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote (*Walden*), "Man flows at once to God when the channel of purity is opened." Our channel of purity is the uncluttered mind and a clear consciousness.

When you pray, believing, prove your faith by preparing for response. A "wait to see" attitude proves lack of conviction, an absence of faith, an unwillingness to accept the results of surrendered prayer. If you pray for healing, do every practical thing you know to help yourself to wellness. If you pray for peace of mind, cultivate peacefulness and serenity and avoid circumstances which disturb your peace. If you pray for release from resentment, regret, guilt, or memories of trauma, forgive and release. If you pray for more available material resources, do what you can to open the channels through which they can flow into your life. If you pray for the means to be available to travel to a distant place, make your travel plans. If you pray for spiritual growth, study valid sources of information and meditate regularly and correctly. God often helps us when we don't do anything to help ourselves, but response can be more obvious when we do our part in the prayer process.

Because the universe is a continuum, a series of related aspects, we are ever relating to one thing. Because our minds are portions of cosmic mind, it is responsive to our thoughts and needs. Because we are spiritual beings living in the field of God now, God is ever-present and ever-available and can be directly discerned and experienced.

If you have acquired the incorrect idea of God being separate from

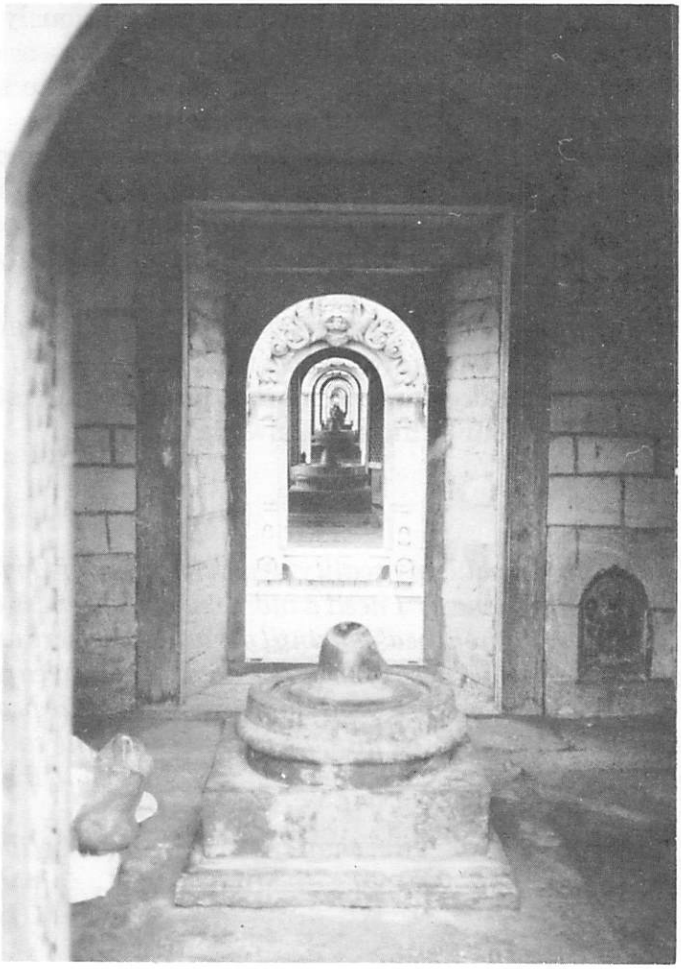
you, it may require patient practice to begin to consciously realize that *God-is-you*. You are not God, because God is the cosmic Being and you are not, but you can lose your sense of separate self and experience the allness of God's nature and reality.

There will come a time in your spiritual growth experience when you will not have to pray to God. You will be God conscious. You will not have to ask for anything; everything you need will be spontaneously provided in divine order. You will no longer have any will of your own; only God's will, will be done.

Until you awaken to that level of awareness, work at any level necessary, as honestly, sincerely, and selflessly as you can. This is the way to grow spiritually and to be at that place in understanding where God's grace is your sufficiency, always.

I know, in my soul, my reality as a perfect ray of God's reflected light. Whenever I need a more vivid awareness of this I will pray without ceasing until all inner barriers are dissolved and the fullness of the presence of God is clearly experienced. I will not pray selfish prayers, but will pray for legitimate needs to be unfolded, for God's will to be done, and for all people to more obviously awaken to their infinite possibilities.

I am happy in God. I am thankful in God. I am settled in peace of soul that cannot be disturbed.



Interior of Shiva Linga temple. A series of temple alcoves draws the pilgrim's consciousness deeper into the interior of the mystery. *Photo taken at Katmandu, Nepal.*

Through the vital centers there is a secret path. By opening this pathway devotees are relieved from the bondage of birth and death. This pathway can be opened by the practice of pranayama. By accomplishing this, the crown chakra is reached, which is the seat of pure consciousness, and is found with its creative force as the cosmic sound current. *ANCIENT YOGA TEXT*

As a result of mastery of upward flowing prana in the body one becomes invulnerable to various forces and manifestations of Nature and experiences victory over death. *YOGA SUTRAS 3:40*

Path of God Breathing
INNER TRANSFORMATION MEDITATION TECHNIQUE

If you have been faithful in the practice of the meditation techniques taught in the preceding Lessons, you are now ready to use a more advanced procedure. *Path of God breathing* is also referred to as *siddha pranayama* (the meditation method of Yoga Masters) and as *kundalini pranayama*. It is a simple technique used to encourage the awakening of dormant vital forces and to direct them upward through the central spinal pathway, to the brain centers.

It is not difficult to learn and gentle practice will result in proficiency. Path of God breathing is preliminary to learning the more advanced Kriya Yoga meditation techniques; however, of itself, it will result in accelerated spiritual growth because of inner transformation, improved concentration during meditation and the experience of superconscious states. This instruction is for you alone, and should not be shared with persons who have not prepared themselves by learning and practicing the more basic meditation procedures.

In earlier Lessons it was explained that when a meditator is internalized, vital forces tend to be balanced in the system. The major channel through which they flow is the sushumna, the path of God in the body of man. You may have already experienced a degree of awareness in the spinal pathway and perhaps some movements of vital force there. This technique will enable you to acquire conscious control over prana flows and enable you to contribute to the refine-

ment of the physical and astral bodies as well as purify the mental field.

If you precede meditation practice with a Hatha Yoga routine, conclude with a few rounds of alternate nostril breathing to balance prana flows in the body. Then, sit for meditation.

Let your awareness and feeling be in the spinal pathway. Imagine the sushumna to be like a hollow tube from the bottom of your spine to the brain. The procedure is to use a special way of breathing to *pull* life force up through sushumna, into the higher brain and spiritual eye, then let the current descend when you exhale.

To do this, exhale, drop your tongue back just a little to open your throat. As you inhale through the nostrils, feel the air against the back of the throat and feel as though you are pulling current up the spinal pathway in a smooth flow. Pause for a moment. Let the air flow out through the nostrils naturally and feel the current flow down through sushumna. Pause briefly, inhale and pull the current upward, pause, let the current descend.

Be relaxed and experiment until you feel you are having results. Remember, your attention is in the spinal pathway and brain, while looking into the spiritual eye. You need not overly imagine the current flowing—the key to practice is to *feel* the current flowing. When it moves you feel a mild pleasurable sensation in the spine and brain as the current ascends, and a soothing flow of current flowing downward with exhalation. Breathe in, pulling the current up; exhale naturally while letting the current flow down. This is Path of God breathing and is considered a "secret" among yogis—secret, in that it should only be taught to persons who are prepared to practice it and who are doing their best to live a righteous life.

Continue gentle practice of the technique, going more and more deeply within, until you feel inclined to let it drop away. Then remained internalized, listening to OM, flowing into the spiritual eye and contemplating the field of pure consciousness.

During and after practice you will feel light and joyous. The initial pleasurable experience may be due to the regenerative currents circulating. Your joy will be that of clear awareness and superconscious perception. Until the experience of transcendence, when you are superconscious to any degree you will experience a variety of pleasurable states: the physical pleasure due to pranas moving in the body, emotional satisfaction due to inner peace, mental

serenity due to superconscious influences, joy of soul due to soul awareness. This latter pleasure is sometimes described as bliss, for which the Sanskrit word is *ananda.* (Many yogis who enter the monastic order of swamis assume a new name at the time of initiation, one often ending in ananda. *Yogananda,* for instance, means "bliss through union with God.")

The internal joy here referred to should not be confused with emotional states. While emotions may sometimes surface during interludes of prayer and meditation, they should not be encouraged. Rather, let your feelings run deep, so that your forces become internalized and superconscious states may be more easily realized.

Helpful Guidelines to Meditation Practice

Since the direct approach to becoming internalized and meditating effectively is to withdraw attention from sense organs and upward through the spinal pathway, learn to be more aware of the spiritual eye, chakras and sushumna during the day when you are not meditating. This will help you to be more centered, as well as awaken your astral perceptions. You will be less dominated by physical sensations and more intuitive. With heightened astral perception you will become increasingly aware of the existence of fine forces within you and in your immediate environment.

During the day, when you think to do it, be centered in the four higher chakras: heart, throat, spiritual eye and crown chakra. Be grounded, of course, so that you can easily function through your body, while at the same time let your awareness function more through the higher centers. You will feel lighter, more aware, and less at the mercy of physical and sensory urges. When you do this you encourage an upward flow of prana, which somewhat neutralizes the downward flow. When prana flows mostly downward we tend to identify more strongly with the senses. When prana flows upward, our mental states and states of consciousness are elevated. Also, creative forces usually involved with physical and emotional states are encouraged to flow into the higher chakras and brain, enlivening them with renewing influence. The higher centers, being then magnetized, attract more vital force upward. Kundalini, dormant in most people, becomes more pronounced in its actions. Kundalini has been referred to as the evolutionary force in the body. It is soul force

which sleeps in unawakened man and becomes creatively influential in awakened man.

When kundalini influences become pronounced, it is important that the devotee maintain a balanced schedule of activity and rest, choose a nutritious food plan, have a lifestyle which is fully supportive of spiritual growth, and maintain emotional and mental poise. An erratic schedule, improper diet, insufficient rest, purposeless behavior, emotional conflicts, and mental unrest should be avoided. Physical regeneration and psychological transformation require that the body and mind be nourished in every way.

Vital forces should not be wasted by excessive talk, worry, stress, restless behavior, destructive personal habits, purposeless living, or by excessive association with people who are egocentric. The vital forces thus conserved can be transmuted into more refined energies. These, in turn, become the inner radiance which provides personal magnetism and further transforms the brain and nervous system, the material organs through which our consciousness is processed.

Some people notice a more pronounced sex urge as a result of practicing Hatha Yoga routines and working with the life forces. One reason for this may be a general improvement of health and the fact that a natural sex urge often accompanies such an improvement. Some people may mistakenly think that kundalini awakening causes sexual cravings when, in fact, the enlivening effects of the creative forces merely contribute to our well-being. Sexual relationships, in appropriate circumstances, can be spontaneous and natural without interfering with psychological or spiritual growth. Excessive preoccupation with sexual matters can be psychologically damaging, as can repression of natural urges and the harboring of unrealistic attitudes. It is simply not true that one need choose a celibate lifestyle in order to grow spiritually. A lifestyle that is natural, emotionally satisfying and supportive of total wellness is the ideal.

To transmute the sex drive, live a well-balanced life, meditate, be goal oriented and keep attention in the higher chakras. Avoid sexually stimulating thoughts and conversations. Choose how you will use your energies while, at the same time, maintaining a healthy attitude about body functions and life processes. You are a spiritual being, playing a male or female role, and as a soul you are superior to desires and natural urges. You can satisfy useful desires and express natural urges when inclined, and regulate them when you

choose to do so.

The spiritual eye is sometimes referred to as "the third eye," "the eye of intuition," "the eye of the astral body," and "the pathway through which one is born into higher realms." When pranas are balanced and awareness is no longer strongly identified with the senses, intuition functions more easily and perceptions of subtle forces are possible.

When the guru blesses a disciple he or she will often touch the disciple's forehead with their hand. More than a symbolic gesture, prana flowing from the guru's hand can magnetize the disciple's spiritual eye and awaken it. The disciple may thereafter feel a mild pressure at the spiritual eye, be more conscious of it during the day, and find it easier to meditate. And, because intuition is somewhat awakened when spiritual eye awareness is more pronounced, the disciple may acquire increased powers of discernment. Also, because of the spiritual eye being magnetized, the heart chakra may be influenced, resulting in the awakening of devotion and a more obvious sense of commitment on the spiritual path. The disciple is then well advised to further cultivate devotion and surrender to God, while also developing intellectual capacities. The path of intellect alone, can be barren of genuine spiritual experience. On the other hand, a purely devotional path can result in emotionalism and foolish sentimentality. Either path can lead to enlightenment but the more satisfying path is usually that which blends intellectual inquiry with devotion to God.

A self-defeating practice is that of attempting to live a double life; that is, to try to cultivate spiritual growth while, at the same time, living a sense-determined life. A person may say, "I keep my spiritual practices private, but when I am with my friends I live as they live in order not to appear different in their eyes." If your friends and associates are high-minded, spiritually aware persons, there will be no problem. If you "live after the flesh," without discipline and without attending to matters consistent with higher values, your spiritual progress will be stifled. Natural, healthy relationships and activities can be enjoyed, but be sure you are not creating inner conflict by allowing yourself to be pulled by opposing forces. Make up your mind how you are going to live your life, then live it that way.

Initial Spiritual Quickening and the Growth that Follows

Our initial spiritual quickening is usually but the beginning of a long, inward journey to psychological maturity and final spiritual realization. The duration of the journey should not be cause for unhappiness, for once awakened, we are open to discovery after discovery. Do not mistakenly think that you will miss anything worthwhile when you are on the spiritual path. To the contrary, you will experience every useful relationship and perception and avoid only the misfortune and episodes of unhappiness you might have encountered had you not gotten on the path. You will lose nothing of value, but will be provided everything of infinite worth. Human happiness, based as it is on transitory relationships and circumstances, is precarious. Soul contentment, grounded in God-realization, is eternal.

A few aspirants, for whom destiny has arranged seclusion for the purpose of single-minded study and practice, do not have to contend with the usual challenges which often go along with family and social relationships. But wherever providence has placed us, there we can proceed with determined endeavor. There, we can learn our lessons, order our lives, make a useful contribution to the general good and engage in intentional spiritual practices. The spiritual path is one of aloneness—not loneliness, because we are never alone when our refined perceptions enable us to know our relationship with God and our place in the cosmic plan.

Even with loving family members and supportive friends, and in the midst of activity, our relationship with God remains personal and our growth experiences are our own. The secret of living with soul contentment in this world is to be able to live without illegitimate desire. We naturally desire to know God. We naturally desire to have personal needs met. We naturally desire to satisfy normal curiosity. But desire for things and experiences which cannot contribute to real happiness—our own or for others—can blind us to higher values and lead us into the paths of unrighteousness, confusing the mind and further complicating our lives.

Everything we do prior to enlightenment—attending to duties, study and meditation—is preparation for it. When insight dawns everything will be made clear. "Knowledge of God came in a flash," one saint said, "and all problems were instantly solved." Path of God

one saint said, "and all problems were instantly solved." Path of God breathing is extremely useful as preparation for enlightenment because it makes body and mind more receptive to superconscious influences. When practicing the technique, remember to proceed gently, without strain. Once the current begins to flow, it will continue by itself. After practicing the technique, sit for a long time in the silence contemplating the formless field of pure consciousness.

The results of Path of God breathing will be meditative tranquility and superconscious awareness. During the day, when not meditating, you may feel subtle movements of prana circulating throughout the spinal pathway and brain. Heretofore dormant forces, now aroused by your practice, will be guided by an innate intelligence to perform their transforming work. Learn to attend to your outer duties without being overly concerned about the inner processes which have been put into action. During inactive interludes, however, you may let the inner activity draw your attention back to the center, back to soul awareness. In this way you can be more easily inwardly stable at all times.

Do not be concerned about inner transformation processes. As a devotee of God you are committed on the spiritual path, so allow the spirit of God within you to perform its wonders, as it will.

In time, your awareness will extend beyond the body and you will actually experience the existence of and a relationship with a larger dimension of reality. Allow yourself time to undergo inner changes. The intelligence within you knows how to determine your progress.

Personal Comprehension Review

Use this review opportunity to improve your understanding of the Lesson material and facilitate your practice.

1. What is the purpose of Kriya Yoga practice?

2. What are the practical means of purifying the physical body, subtle body and mind?

3. Review pages 6 and 7 and practice the suggested routines.

4. What is prayer?

5. What are some forms of prayer?

6. What is the best way to pray on behalf of others?

7. If you are praying for results, what will you do to help yourself so that results can be forthcoming?

8. Describe the technique of Path of God breathing.

9. Review your thoughts, moods and behaviors to see if they are consistent with your highest ideals.

10. Read pages 168-224 in *Life Surrendered in God.*

Reflections

Genuine religious experience always results in enhanced soul awareness, psychological health and improved function. It is therefore important for us to examine experiences which seem to fall into the category of *religious* and to exercise intelligence to determine the legitimacy of such events.

That which is truly religious brings us closer to God. The more God is real to us, the more are the qualities of righteousness and truth expressed. With increasing divine awareness we have fewer illusions and delusional perceptions are replaced by clear understanding. Read chapter sixteen in the *Bhagavad Gita* for guidelines on what constitutes a life anchored in divine awareness, then let this information be helpful in determining whether or not you are expressing pure soul qualities.

When we are yet new on the spiritual path, and somewhat immature and perhaps naive, we may have a tendency to too quickly assume personal perceptions and experiences (as well as those expressed or reported by others) to be valid spiritual growth indications. By using common sense, intelligence, and intuition, and by referring to authoritative sources, we can learn to see beyond appearances to what is real and meaningful.

Whatever interior perceptions you might have, or seeming discoveries or insights which come to mind, be willing to examine them in the light of reason. If they are valid, they will be discerned as such. If they are not, let them go.

From a higher perspective, all inner experiences and perceptions other than that of pure awareness are but passing incidents common to spiritual growth and soul actualization. Therefore, it is a good idea not to become fascinated with any incident, but to keep on contemplating higher possibilities.

When praying or meditating, experiences of soul peace, tranquility, a sense of oneness with life and God are valid perceptions, the results of which enhance our lives to a considerable degree. Interior

joy, episodes of ecstasy, intense surges of devotional ardor, can also be satisfying and, to a degree, rewarding. But one should not look to such future experiences with such intensity that the purpose of spiritual practice and meditation is neglected. The purpose of our spiritual questing is to become completely Self-realized and enlightened. Enlightenment means knowledge, and knowledge does not allow for errors in perception.

When practicing certain procedures, such as pranayama and some meditation techniques which involve moving life force through the chakras, powerful movements of vital force sometimes result in extremely pleasurable sensations. These should be acknowledged for what they are, and not necessarily as evidence of soul unfoldment. Interior pleasure may be experienced along with soul unfoldment and, if so, can be accepted and even enjoyed. But I have known many sincere devotees who could experience at will interior pleasure when meditating, who were far from being psychologically balanced or possessed of obvious powers of rational thinking. Some were even somewhat *goofy* (a slang or colloquial term for "foolish" or "stupid") in their everyday relationships. We may have to work through present psychological states but we would do well not to reinforce them by indulging in inattentive behavior.

Even when you feel (what to you seems to be) love for God and mankind, maintain your rationality and avoid immature behavior. Don't walk around dramatizing sentimental devotion, hug strangers who may not want to be hugged, or take leave of your senses. Let your devotion to God and your compassion for others be appropriately demonstrated in ways which are entirely constructive and useful.

Until we are completely Self-realized there will be numerous opportunities to experience illusory and delusional states of mind. If you think you are "hearing" voices in your mind, know that your mind is talking to itself. Do not assume that an inner "guide" or friendly "spirit" is giving you guidance. If you feel impelled to voice your seeming inspirations (or write them), let it be an exercise in discernment. Do not falsely assume that everything that comes into your mind, no matter how lovely and meaningful it seems to be, is the result of divine revelation. You have intelligence, use it. You have intuition, let it guide you. You have authoritative sources to which to refer, refer to them. Find out the truth about everything within range

of your awareness.

Before Paramahansaji made his transition he told some disciples, "Do not try to contact me through a medium after I am gone. I, nor any of the gurus, will ever speak through a medium." This has not prevented many non-disciples from claiming themselves to be channels for Paramahansaji and other spiritual masters, nor has it discouraged many people from believing them. All instances of purported channeling of enlightened masters, in whatever form used, are either fraudulent or the result of self-deception on the part of the claimed medium. Therefore, if you would grow steadily in grace and God consciousness, avoid such involvements. This is not only my advice based on my own realization and over forty years of spiritual practice, it is the advice of every other truly enlightened person of whom I have knowledge.

One incarnation is too brief in duration to waste your time in misguided relationships and activities. You should have more important things to do with your time and energy. Your personal spiritual growth is important and the spiritual education of humanity is important. Use your resources to worthwhile projects and you will become an emotionally mature and spiritually aware person.

You may, at times, feel that you are "called" to do a special work for the good of mankind and the world. If so, further your education, learn how to proceed and follow your guidance. That which calls you also knows how to fulfill your calling. Examine your urge to respond to what seems to be an urge to be more useful in the world. Are you a fit vessel through which the work can be done? Are you qualified; that is, prepared to do what needs to be done? Is the calling legitimate or is it a psychological distortion because of a tendency to compensate for an otherwise seemingly frustrating set of personal circumstances?

Don't be afraid to be self-honest. You are living now in eternity and now is the time to get clear about your relationships and your purposes. Now is the time to wake up and be as intelligently functional as possible.

Are your relationships worthwhile? Is what you habitually do worthwhile? If not, why not? If not, why do you persist in such relationships and behaviors?

You can live a heavenly life now, if you want to. What are the most ideal circumstances you can imagine for yourself? Then acknowledge

those circumstances and actualize them. What is the highest knowledge and experience of God you can aspire unto? Then do what you have to do to allow that knowledge and experience to be yours. Just don't settle for less than what you are capable of knowing, experiencing and having in your life.

Just because you are a "new age" person or are on a "spiritual path" is no guarantee that your spiritual growth will be steady and worthwhile. What is required is discipleship, focus, dedication and soul commitment to spiritual living. Indecision, confusion, self-righteousness and fear of useful change are obstacles to spiritual growth. Even self-centered smugness because of falsely assuming we are assured of salvation is the result of delusion.

If spiritual growth were easy for most people we would have more enlightened individuals on the planet than we now do. How many really enlightened people do you know? Or, to be more personal: how enlightened are you? And to be even more personal: what do you need to do to allow spiritual growth and to fulfill life's purposes in this present life-cycle? In your heart, you know. From your soul, you have the capacity to do it.

Allow Others to be Free
The World is Big Enough for Everyone

Every person is at the center of his or her universe. Every person is living out of his or her own present state of consciousness. What is real for you is determined by how you see the world. What is real for others is determined by how they see the world.

As you appreciate the freedom to learn your lessons and grow according to your own capacity, so allow others the freedom to do likewise. Attend to your own inner growth and bless others as they experience their personal growth experiences. In this way, live without judgment or conflict, without worry or concern.

Who determines our destiny? God does, in accord with our personal endeavors and needs. God is also seeing to the orderly spiritual growth of all souls in the universe, so love all people and let them go their way with God. You will be happier as a result and they will be happier as they grow in understanding and grace.

– Roy Eugene Davis

CENTER FOR SPIRITUAL AWARENESS
STUDIES IN TRUTH LESSON GUIDE
MASTER COURSE NUMBER TEN

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The Inner Path of Kriya Yoga

HIGHER LEVELS OF UNDERSTANDING AND PRACTICE

That measureless love which is God Himself, dwells in the pure deeps of our spirit, like a burning brazier of coals. And it throws forth brilliant and fiery sparks which stir and enkindle heart and senses, will and desire, and all the powers of the soul, with a fire of love.

JAN VAN RUYSBROECK (1293-1381)
The Book of Supreme Truth

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Only that devotee who learns by practice the inner way to soul discovery is truly knowledgeable of the workings of the spirit of God. All things discovered in the sanctuary of the soul are naturally expressed in the daily life of a true disciple.

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There is a way for the soul to know its destined purpose in life. Knowing and living it, results in joy and perfect freedom. Here is how to know your destined purpose, the way of understanding, compassion and eternal happiness in God.

Cosmic Consciousness 19

Cosmic consciousness is the first stage of higher realization. Prior to it is a degree of soul-realization. From cosmic consciousness the soul awakens to knowledge of God and transcendence. Alert attention on the awakening path and God's grace make progress steady and fulfilling.

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Studies in Truth Lesson Guides are published and distributed by Center for Spiritual Awareness for private use and guided study supervised by acknowledged CSA ministers, teachers and group leaders. Prepared and written by Roy Eugene Davis as an examination of the enlightenment process, with emphasis on the traditions, philosophy and practice of Kriya Yoga. Center for Spiritual Awareness, Post Office Box 7, Lake Rabun Road, Lakemont, Georgia 30552 (U.S.A.) In West Africa: Center for Spiritual Awareness, Post Office Box 507, Accra, Ghana.

The soul within me is greater than this earth and the sky and the heaven and all these united. That which performs and will all, to which belong all sweet juices and fragrant odors, which envelops the world and is silent and is no respecter of persons, that is the soul within me. It is God.

THE UPANISHADS

The soul, when it shall have driven away from itself all that is contrary to the Divine Will, becomes transformed in God in love—the soul then becomes immediately enlightened by and transformed in God, because He communicates His own supernatural being in such a way that the soul seems to be God Himself and to possess the things of God, the soul seems to be God rather than itself and indeed is God by participation.

SAINT JOHN OF THE CROSS (1542-1591)
The Ascent of Mount Carmel

The Inner Path of Kriya Yoga

HIGHER LEVELS OF UNDERSTANDING AND PRACTICE

Advanced instruction in Kriya Yoga practices is traditionally given directly from teacher to student, from guru to disciple. The practical reason for this is that on a personal level the teacher can more easily determine the student's suitability for instruction and the level of receptivity. More, personal instruction provides for the pure teaching to be transmitted in ways best suited to the student's needs. Finally, personal contact allows that which impersonal relationships cannot—the transmission of creative force which flows from higher realms through the teacher to the student.

For instruction to be soul-elevating, it must be authoritative and it must be pure. Enlightenment teachings are authoritative if they have been experienced by the teacher and thereby proven to be valid. They are pure, clear, when devoid of conflicting influences, theories, and opinions. The only proof of a teaching is that results follow when the teaching is applied.

In the Kriya Yoga tradition the guru disciple relationship is valued because it allows personal interaction and provides guidance and encouragement on the spiritual path. With personal interaction,

the guru can monitor the disciple's progress and the disciple can have the benefit of the guru as a role model, as well as receive the influence of his or her consciousness and creative energy. Guidance is usually needed by the disciple because discernment is not always flawless. Encouragement is often needed by the disciple, to provide motivation and to help him through challenging circumstances.

If one is already certain of having a surrendered relationship with God, has keen discernment and is self-motivated on the enlightenment path, personal contact with a guru may not be necessary. One who is thus already involved on the enlightenment path will keep his own counsel and attend to necessary procedures. One who boasts of not needing help on the spiritual path is obviously in need of it. One should not seek a guru disciple relationship unless fully prepared to commit to it, follow instructions, apply what is learned, and remain loyal to that path. The guru disciple relationship is not one to be "tried to see if it works" or entered into in a superficial way. If one does not feel ready for such a relationship, then it can be useful to communicate with an enlightened teacher from time to time for the inspiration which can be provided. If this is not desired, or is not possible, then access to published material of a helpful nature can be useful.

When I asked to be a disciple, Paramahansaji accepted me and gave me instructions. He asked, "Will you do as I say?" I said, "Yes, sir." He then proceeded to advise me about behavior with others, attitude toward work and duty, regular meditation, the cultivation of devotion to God, and the importance of remaining in tune with him. He also told me to read only his books "and a few others" for the first year. Included in the reading program were his books and printed materials, The New Testament, and the *Bhagavad Gita*. Two or three other books about Christian saints were allowed. He said, "Read a little, meditate more, and think of God all the time." He stressed loyalty to the tradition and to him and the guru line. He spoke from authority based on experience and emphasized purity of motive, thought and behavior.

While all authentic enlightenment traditions are of value, the one of our personal destiny is the one which should be adhered to. To mix, to adulterate teachings and practices is to invite mental and emotional confusion. It is like attempting to tune in all of the available radio and television signals at the same time. There is also

the possibility of divided loyalties, too much varied information to assimilate, and too much time given to analysis of various teachings instead of applying procedures which are beneficial. It is best to honor all authentic enlightenment traditions, while remaining "in love" with the one to which your soul best responds.

Who is the True Guru?

The true guru, the light which removes darkness, is God. Paramahansji often said, "I am not the guru. God is the guru, I am but his servant." But since open access to God is not always easy for a devotee on the path, the next best relationship is with an enlightened person who is established in God-realization. Such a person has no selfish inclinations and only serves to awaken souls. If we doubt the motives of such a person, if we resist the help which is offered, we are but projecting our own confusions and dramatizing our own resistance to needed psychological change and spiritual growth.

The inner path of Kriya Yoga is the way of surrender in God and total commitment to the enlightenment process. No one can be forced into this and it can never be a group movement. It will always be personal, even though devotees on the same path may enjoy fellowship and share common aims and purposes. When there is group fellowship, individual dependence should always be upon God, not upon the group or individuals comprising the group. The inner path is a personal path which no one else can fully know or share with us.

When Lahiri Mahasaya began to teach Kriya Yoga and initiate disciples, he counseled them to maintain their privacy and not to overly talk about their relationship with him or their spiritual practices. He emphasized "the secret way to God": not an exclusive way but a personal soul to God relationship. Superficial practice, indiscriminate reading, too much purposeless socializing and random conversation, cause mental restlessness and emotional confusion. The relatively still waters of the ocean are deep, not at the surface. The still place of the soul is deep, not on the surface of the mind. When we are focused on the enlightenment path, what others think or say about our practices is not important. It is none of their business. Our spiritual business is with God alone. Likewise, the inner life of other devotees is none of our business. Paramahansaji used to say to restless disciples, "Don't talk so much. Don't waste your time running here and there. Dive deep in meditation and lose

yourself in God. Then go about your daily routine and let your inner happiness reveal your love of God."

While attending to useful daily routines and having regular meditation practice as the foundation of his life, a devotee also needs to pay attention to the guidance of conscience. Our own inner sense of what is right will prompt us to behave appropriately, if we let it. Sometimes, of course, psychological obstacles are rooted in the unconscious and we are not aware of them or we conveniently disregard them when we are somewhat aware of them. The guru can see what we cannot see and we should be willing to allow our limitations to be pointed out to us so that we can correct them. Better yet, when we become aware of them, we should act immediately to eliminate them without having to be motivated by outside influences.

Sometimes, when more internalized as a result of being dedicated to spiritual growth, deeper psychological drives may become known to us and we may be tempted to become overly preoccupied with them. Avoid self-judgment and self-condemnation. You are not your mind or its contents. The mental field has to be cleared of restrictions but this is best done from an objective point of view. Be self-reminded that the more your mental field is cleared of restrictions, the more aware and functional you will be. And if you are thinking about doing good in the world, the fewer mental restrictions you have, the more good you will be able to do. And the good you do should be selfless good. You can plan, act, and even appreciate outcomes of your actions, but give the final results to God.

Your daily routines and meditation practice will keep you steady on the path while changes are occurring and inner growth is being experienced. In almost every instance, when a devotee informs me of extreme personal challenges, it will be admitted that attention to daily routines and meditation practice has been neglected.

Another major contributing cause of mental confusion, emotional unrest and disordered circumstances is tiredness because of not eating correctly or because of insufficient rest or exercise.

These Lessons have purposely been published in convenient form to be referred to frequently. Refer to them on a regular schedule to review the material and improve your understanding and practice of procedures. Even if you read other material, come back to these Lessons to be reminded of the basic principles.

Because the Kriya Yoga path is the inner way to God-realization, one need not separate from a religious affiliation which has value. If association with an organized religious group is not of value, it should either be renounced or deeper study made to discover whatever is meaningful in the teaching. Kriya Yoga gurus have always freely taught and initiated persons regardless of personal religious faith or affiliation. Outer forms which one finds useful can be adhered to; the inner way is the way which leads beyond outer forms and theological opinion.

The Kriya Yoga path is for devotees of various temperaments and psychological capacities because it includes every possible useful approach to meet personal needs. Devotion, selfless service, the use of intelligence, meditation, and the practice of specific meditation techniques are recommended. For one who finds advanced meditation too challenging, preliminary meditation procedures are offered. For the devotee whose intellect is not acute, devotion and service are emphasized while intellectual abilities improve. Kriya Yoga, then, is for everyone sincerely intent on the spiritual path.

Some people say that because we are in the Dark Age Kriya Yoga is not suitable for devotees, that the way of devotion alone is best. But we are not in the Dark Age, we are in an ascending Electrical Cycle, moving toward a Mental Age and Age of Enlightenment. Kriya Yoga is the way of appropriate action for devotees at any level of awareness, regardless of the Age which is dominant. To say that devotion alone is the way of our times is to appeal to weak-minded people who are emotionally immature. What such people really need is to be motivated to grow up, become clear-minded and get involved in worthwhile growth practices.

God, being the true guru and the inner Self of every person, will assist the spiritual awakening process if allowed to do so. Our responsibility is to prepare ourselves so that innate divine qualities can unfold. Weak-mindedness, emotional immaturity, self-centeredness, and laziness are definite obstacles to the inclination of God to express and should be eliminated from our lives.

The Trend of Spiritual Unfoldment in the Current Awakening Time-Cycle

This spiritual teaching emphasis, obscured for centuries because of neglect and disinterest, is now becoming increasingly available to

God-yearning souls. It is a wise person who becomes whole-heartedly involved with spiritual growth practices now because individual growth is strongly supported by evolutional currents. Devotees who do not contribute to their spiritual growth will not be able to appreciate or adapt to the changes which are coming.

While technological discoveries will continue to be made and vast improvements realized by the majority of Earth's population, the more dramatic unfoldments will be in the mental capacities and spiritual awareness of increasing numbers of people. Consciousness itself is the last frontier to be explored and it is already being examined. Since consciousness is the single reality and everything exists in it, it is consciousness which has to be experienced and understood. When it is, all its various aspects can be understood. Just as becoming aware of our soul nature enables us to know our correct relationship with our mind and body, so becoming aware of universal consciousness enables us to understand its correct relationship with cosmic mind and the universe. But consciousness cannot be fully comprehended from an objective point of view. It must be explored subjectively; hence, the need for the inner way to knowledge.

Because the inner way is not accessible by mental means, the mind itself being external to inner causes, knowledge of how to transcend mental operations is necessary. The various approaches recommended in the Kriya Yoga tradition actually facilitate such endeavors, and the meditation techniques provide a scientific way to proceed.

Meditation for personal benefits and a degree of spiritual growth are first taught to new Kriya Yoga students, after preliminary philosophical explanations and lifestyle routines have been provided. The simple approach of prayer and relaxed meditation are taught first, often along with a mantra or some other suitable procedure that is easy to understand and practice. This level of teaching alone, if shared with the multitudes, would contribute greatly to improved mental and physical health, social harmony, and a comfortable standard of living for most people. It does not require a high degree of intelligence or even total commitment to live a balanced life and meditate every day for a short period of time.

Next, cosmic sound current contemplation is taught, along with more instruction about spiritual eye vision. This is sometimes

learned by the meditator spontaneously as a result of deeper mantra meditation practice. These two meditation techniques alone are sufficient to result in superconscious states and even God-realization.

To more specifically contribute to inner transformation, supplemental meditation methods are taught, as have been taught in this Lesson series: contemplating the chakras, expanding in conscious blue light, sushumna breathing, and others.

All the while, encouragement is given to live responsibly and consciously, to be surrendered in God and to learn to live harmoniously in the world. Attention to outer matters is just as important to inner ones if rapid spiritual growth is desired.

Finally, an advanced meditation technique is taught to enable the devotee to regulate the body's vital forces and dynamically move them through the spinal pathway and brain. This, along with supplemental procedures, is always taught as initiation into higher levels of practice. By this time the devotee is ready for total commitment to the Kriya Yoga path. After some years of continued practice, when proficiency has been acquired, even more advanced meditation techniques may be taught. The final stages of soul unfoldment will occur spontaneously as a result of practice and God's grace.

Eight limiting characteristics of a deluded consciousness are mentioned in yogic texts: hatred, shame, fear, grief, judgmental condemnation, race prejudice, family pride, and complacent self-satisfaction. Some or all of these are common to the unenlightened human condition and are often considered as basic to human nature. They are, in fact, obstacles to be overcome by the sincere devotee of God. When they are overcome, they are replaced by love, self-respect, courage, understanding, acceptance, caring, brotherhood, and humility. Psychological and spiritual growth is then easy for one who has successfully attained a more universal outlook on life.

All human limitations are due to misunderstanding caused by misperception. The psychological way to remove obstacles to clear perception is the way of self-responsible choice. The spiritual way is the way of expanding consciousness beyond restricting influences in order to directly experience higher realities. Both need to be utilized for best results.

The path which leads to Self-realization is not for the person who overeats or who fasts too much. It is not for the person who sleeps too much or who sleeps hardly at all (as an act of penance). For the person who is temperate in taking food and in his recreational pursuits, who is controlled in his actions, whose habits are regulated, a natural discipline results which destroys all sorrow. When the disciplined mind is established in the realization of the true Self and is liberated from all desires, a person is said to be harmonized in his practice. As a lamp in a windless place does not flicker, to such is compared the mind of a self-controlled meditator. In that condition in which he finds supreme joy, perceived by the intellect and beyond reach of the senses, therein established, he no longer falls away from realization. Gaining that supreme awareness beyond which there is no greater gain, he is firmly established and is not shaken by the darkest sorrow. Let this state of consciousness be known as true Self-realization. This should be continued with determination, without faltering and without regret. Whatever tempts the mind to waver, let it be overcome and let attention be focused on the Supreme Reality. For the highest happiness comes to the person whose feelings are at rest, whose consciousness is clear, and who has realized his true nature. In this way, the devotee who has seen through error experiences easily the infinite bliss of God-realization.

Bhagavad Gita 6:16-27

It is upon the inward condition that the outward reality depends. The visible universe is to us what our invisible souls choose to make it. Here we have a reason for looking at the things which are unseen—for making them the chief object of our attention. In so doing, we become conversant with the primal source of reality. We ascend to the original fountain of Being, from which the streams that flow forth receive their properties and their direction.

GEORGE RIPLEY (1802-1880)
Discourses on the Philosophy of Religion

Life is as dear to all beings as it is to oneself; feel compassion for every being, taking thy own Self as the measure. *THE UPANISHADS*

Lifestyle Guidelines

HOW TO KNOW YOUR DESTINED PURPOSE IN LIFE

It is my personal testimony that God is real, there is a divine purpose for our being in this world, that this purpose can be known, and that by right personal effort and God's grace, our destiny will be fulfilled.

When we think about personal destiny our awareness has to expand. Besides the more than 6 billion embodied souls comprising the human race, there are countless trillions of other units of consciousness animating the almost infinite variety of life forms on the planet. And we must not forget the possibility of animate life forms on planets in the far reaches of our galaxy and other galaxies, and the trillions of other souls expressing in astral, causal spheres and spheres even more subtle and fine. Jesus is described as saying that not a sparrow falls but that God knows. In our current era we might say, in similar fashion, that not a cosmic force moves but that God knows. Just as every cell and friendly unit of bacteria in your body has its function, so each of us has a function in the universe. Our ultimate destined experience is enlightenment, total knowledge of consciousness. Having come from the source into relative involvement, our attention and awareness will be returned to the source. In the meantime, we have useful roles to play in spacetime.

Destiny blends with fate as we awaken from unconscious states

and become increasingly aware. Divine intelligence and evolutional forces propel us in the direction of our destiny and contribute to its unfoldment. Our states of partial awareness and our conditionings contribute to our fate, to our experiencing the effects of unconsciousness and conditioned causes. As we become increasingly aware, our intelligence and intuition become more reliable and mental conditionings become weakened and less influential. Then, instead of being focused on problem-solving and ego-directed activities, we begin to wonder, "Why am I here. What is life all about? What am I supposed to know that I do not yet know? What role am I supposed to play in the universe?" Our spiritual growth becomes important to us. We had been growing before, otherwise we would not have awakened to the level of awareness where we could begin to ask such questions, but perhaps were not aware of the spiritual growth process. But now we are, and a conscious relationship with evolutional forces can be entered into.

Evolution will fulfill its purposes through any responsive conduit for expression. The urge of cosmic life force is to express and it does not withhold itself from some capable agencies and arbitrarily choose others. It can even get things done through relatively unconscious beings, as it does through the simpler life forms as well as many almost unconscious human beings. When one considers the great mass of human beings who are presently either unconscious, given to illusions, self-serving, neurotic, sick, and in various ways dysfunctional, it is amazing that human society functions as well as it does. That in itself is certainly evidence of the thrust of evolution and the workings of God's grace on the world scene.

What is the fundamental approach to finding out why we are here? Quite obviously, it is prayer; that, and sincere desire to know the kind of desire that keeps us ever on the lookout for evidence of guidance. If you know why you are here, I hope you are doing your best to cooperate with life's plan for you. If you are still working to overcome challenges and to solve problems, while you are attending to that matter think about what you will be doing as soon as the challenges are successfully met and the problems are solved. If you cannot yet see a specific future for yourself, at least begin to envision possibilities and know that whatever the future holds for you, it will be wonderful. In this way you will contribute to the expansion of your consciousness and open yourself to higher knowledge. The force of

evolution will acknowledge your receptivity and begin to work more obviously through and around you.

Do not be afraid that you will not be equal to any task life has for you. Who does anything, anyway? God is doing everything. If you are surrendered, if you are willing, if you will do your best to prepare yourself, life will supply everything else, make all necessary arrangements and play all of the useful roles to accomplish its purposes. The more your sense of egoism decreases, the more the spirit of God will increase in you. The less you attempt to accomplish from the personality level, the more will be accomplished by the spirit of God.

As with the early stages of discipleship training, be willing to learn. Understand that all the knowledge you have actualized so far (unless you are fully enlightened) is as nothing compared to what is yet to be revealed.

Even if conscious knowledge is absent, if you will live a surrendered, natural life the forces of evolution will work through you to accomplish its purposes. With conscious knowledge, you will understand the processes of cosmic transformation. For this, a degree of cosmic consciousness is needed, and it will unfold in the course of time.

Live a disciplined life to minimize complications and be more focused on important matters. This will prepare you for your destined role and will ensure your responsiveness to guidance once you are on the righteous way.

Use your powers of reason and your intuition to know when to act and when to be still. Learn to fast from negative thinking and all purposeless behaviors, learn to pray, learn to wait when waiting is necessary. Evolution cannot be forced, but it can be cooperated with and allowed to express more freely. One of the reasons for the many rapid changes in today's awakening world is the accelerated influence of evolutionary forces acting upon Planet Earth and awakening souls to a higher level of awareness. To play a useful role in the current transformative process psychologically mature and spiritually aware men and women have to prepare themselves to be responsive to evolutionary forces, which are God's intelligently directed influences.

By attending to your basic health routines, contribute to the purification of your physical body. By cultivating patience and even-mindedness, contribute to the purification of your astral body and

emotions. By meditating in the cosmic sound current, allow your mind to be purified by superconscious influences.

I am providing you with the knowledge of everything you need to do to assist yourself to spiritual growth and awaken to an understanding of your destined role in life. You have God's grace available to you. You have my good wishes and encouragement. You have the blessings of the saints. All that is required is your own participation.

The Way of the Compassionate Heart

Be reasonable and discerning while, at the same time, allow your caring for others who are your companions on life's journey and for the field of Nature which nourishes everyone, to awaken your compassion, your soul-felt inclination to be of real service. Self-realization is not "selfish-realization," it is realization that all souls are rays from the same source and that there can be a sharing, supportive relationship between compatible souls. Further, there is need for cooperation to preserve and nurture Planet Earth so that the billions of souls which sojourn here, now and in the future, will have a pleasant, safe environment in which to satisfy their legitimate desires and fulfill their destiny.

Compassion is not the same as feeling sorry for someone, although there may be a feeling of empathy. As we have been given the opportunity to learn and grow, so others should be provided the same opportunity.

When Paramahansaji was a young man he felt strongly drawn to the idea of a cloistered, monastic lifestyle. Sri Yukteswar asked him, "Why are you reluctant to be involved in organizational work?" Paramahansaji replied, "Because no matter what a teacher does, or does not do, he is subject to criticism." His guru then responded, "Do you want all of the divine food for yourself? Where would you be today if a line of generous-hearted spiritual masters had not provided you with an opportunity to learn?"

Yes, where would we be if others before us had not felt inclined to share their insights and to make their contributions to the wellness of society and the planet? Even if not everyone you meet is open to spiritual instruction or is not willing to be self-responsible and open-minded, at least see through their personality and silently acknowledge, "I behold your innate divinity."

Love of humanity should begin with family members, then extend to friends and associates, to the community where you live and to the larger world. Include everyone in your compassionate heart, excluding no one.

Do the helpful work you do because it is yours to do, not because of the acknowledgement of others. With practice, you will learn to be appropriate and will be able to get along with anyone, when necessary. Usually, however, the personal interactions will be with kindred spirits, souls with whom you share a common destiny. Destiny relationships are deeper than karmic connections. People with shared destiny can work together through centuries, if need be. People with karmic connections, or similar karmic conditions, need not maintain a personal relationship if one is not desired. In fact, sometimes people with similar karmic conditions reinforce each other's destructive behaviors. Even with a destiny relationship, persons may not immediately be able to work together if there is a difference in levels of awareness, or if one person has not awakened to the knowledge of destiny. Sooner or later, people with shared destiny will recognize one another. There can even be a silent understanding between them without personal interaction. For instance, enlightened teachers may acknowledge and support one another but have different duties and different outer roles to play.

Whether aware of your destiny role or not, live surrendered in God, performing all duties with detachment. Give the results of all actions to God, claiming nothing for yourself. The way is explained in the *Bhagavad Gita* (5:6-10):

> ...true renunciation is difficult to attain without self-discipline; the sage who is surrendered in nonattached action attains the realization of God quickly. He who is trained in this way and is pure in soul, who is the master of his lower nature and who has conquered the senses, whose realization is that he is aware of himself as the life of all beings, he is not tainted by works, even though he is active. The man who is aware that he is a divine being and who knows the truth thinks, "I do nothing at all," for in doing all things he knows it is sense perception only that is involved with things of the world. He who works in this manner is not touched (influenced) by anything of the world.

To live with understanding is to be untouched by externals. You wear clothing but are not attached to it; likewise you wear your body but are not attached to it. You cooperate with people but are not attached to them. You utilize available resources but are not attached to them. You express emotions but are not attached to them. You think thoughts but are not attached to them. So it is with everything that is not you. Even your actions are not your own, nor are the results of actions when you live with understanding. Your only attachment should be to God so long as you are still growing spiritually. Then, when you awaken sufficiently, you are no longer attached to God, you know yourself as a reflected ray of God.

Renunciation is not a matter of outer display, it is an inner attitude and inner understanding. You need not dramatize to others what an accomplished renunciate you are by overtly displaying your independence and certainly not by exhibiting any indication that you are rejecting the world. The world is not to be rejected, it is to be appreciated and nurtured. It is the spiritual training ground for awakening souls, the realm where they work out their salvation.

Compassion is demonstrated by our acceptance of life and our acceptance of people. You may have once been where others are on the awakening path and what you needed then was compassion and a helping hand. The real needs of people have to be met where they are. Hungry people need to be fed, lonely people need to be acknowledged and loved, fearful people need to be encouraged, homeless people need to be sheltered, sick people need to be healed, confused people need to be educated, people still living in spiritual darkness need to be awakened, spiritually awakened people need to be inspired, and almost everyone, unless already resolved on the spiritual path, can benefit by having role models whose behaviors they can learn to emulate.

If you have a compassionate heart and want to be of service but don't know how, prepare yourself by furthering your education and adhering to a constructive lifestyle. Continue your advanced studies and cultivate the virtues. Pray, meditate and contemplate higher realities. The most obvious way to express compassion is to be kind, cheerful, helpful and purposeful. When you see needs, help them to be filled, if you can. When you see hurts, help them to be healed, if you can.

Eliminate most nonessentials from your life and focus on what is

more useful. In this way you will not only speed up your own spiritual growth and actualize your personal dreams more quickly, you will have more available energy to fulfill useful purposes and to be of service. If you will examine the lives of successful people you will observe that they are disciplined and intentional. They have learned how to renounce nonessentials and give their attention to what they consider to be important. They also usually have self-confidence and are possibility-thinkers.

The more you prepare yourself and open your mind and consciousness to the ideal of service, the more the universe will support you and provide the means by which you can serve. You will be led into the paths of righteousness for God's sake, for God's purposes.

Whatever your vocation, circumstances, chosen mode of living or present duties and responsibilities, let both reason and love rule your life. Where there is reason, there will be appropriate behavior and right action. Wherever there is love, there will be demonstrated caring. Reason enables us to arrive at right conclusions and make right choices. Love results in communion, in relationship, and in compassionate behavior which is expressed in appropriate ways.

From the first incident resulting in your involvement with the universe you have been nurtured by God's love. Life has been supportive of you in every way. As you have been loved and supported, you should love and support others. As Nature has nurtured you, you should nurture Nature. In the relative spheres there is mutual interdependence between all expressions of Nature and all souls. This is how the universe works and how life expresses. Your destiny role is that place in the evolutionary process where you best function to serve life's purposes.

Just pray about the matter. Live in harmony with the rhythms of the universe. Let your sense of small self dissolve and your awareness of cosmic sense increase. This is the certain way to know your destined purpose in life.

Now this is nothing else but the supernatural light giving light to the understanding, so that the human understanding becomes divine, made one with the divine. In the same way divine love inflames the will so that it becomes nothing less than divine, loving in a divine way, united and made one with the divine will and the divine love. The memory is affected in like manner; all the desires and affections also are changed divinely according to God. Thus the soul will be of heaven, heavenly, divine rather than human.

It was a happy lot for the soul when God in this night put all its household to sleep—that is, all the powers, passions, affections, and desires...that it may attain to the spiritual union of the perfect love of God "unobserved"—that is, unhindered, by them, because they were all asleep and mortified in that night. O how happy must the soul then be when it can escape from the house of sensuality! None can understand it, I think, except that soul which has experienced it.

The spirit is now so strong, and has so subdued the flesh, and makes so little of it, that it is as regardless of it as a tree is of its leaves. It seeks not for consolation or sweetness either in God or elsewhere, neither does it pray for God's gifts through any motive of self-interest, or its own satisfaction. For all it cares now is how it shall please God and serve Him in some measure in return for His goodness and for the graces it has received...

John Yepes (Called St. John of the Cross)

It is possible to experience enlightenment in your lifetime. Never mind yesterday, let yesterday be forgotten. Begin today. Now. That is the only way.

GOVINDANANDA BHARATI
(the Shivapuri Baba, 1826-1963)

Devotion is really neither more or less than a general inclination and readiness to do that which we know to be acceptable to God. To be truly devout, we must not only do God's will, but we must do it cheerfully.

SAINT FRANCIS OF SALES (1567-1622)
Introduction to a Devout Life

Cosmic Consciousness
THE FIRST STAGE OF HIGHER REALIZATION

Unawakened man experiences the three lower states of consciousness. These are: 1) awareness predominantly influenced by unconsciousness and the karmic residues stored in deeper layers of the mind; 2) awareness predominantly influenced by subconscious states and illusion due to misperception; 3) awareness influenced by self-consciousness, determined by egoism and personality drives.

The fourth state is superconsciousness, which enables the soul to awaken from former conditioned states and explore higher possibilities.

The three higher levels of realization are cosmic consciousness, God consciousness and transcendence, which make possible liberation of consciousness.

Enlightenment, the total unfoldment of our innate knowledge, is the end result of spiritual growth. To experience this, we must be willing to know. An indicator of whether or not we are willing to be knowledgeable to our attitude about learning about the practical matters of functioning on a day-to-day basis. As of the last decade of the 20th century it was reported that at least 50 million people in the United States could not read a daily newspaper with a reasonable degree of comprehension and that in regions of the country approximately 30 percent of highschool students were not graduating. Even many literate, functional people are self-limited because of inability

to understand word meanings, learn new ways of performing their jobs and because of psychological resistance to learning in general. These liabilities, along with egocentric small-mindedness, perpetuate ignorance and are obvious obstacles to spiritual growth. Add to the problem the prevailing fear of acquiring new behaviors and it is easy to understand why the unfoldment of knowledge is often stifled, even for persons who are otherwise sincere on the spiritual path.

If we are to grow spiritually, if we are to be enlightened in the highest sense, it is essential that we learn how to learn, be willing to grow and realistically adopt constructive behaviors as recommended by enlightenment traditions. Sri Yukteswar use to say, "Saintliness is not dumbness!"

To be narrow-minded is to be provincial, to exhibit behavior characteristic of persons whose lives are lived in confining circumstances with little or no knowledge of the larger world. There is a difference between being narrow-minded and loyalty to a chosen spiritual path. The former indicates lack of knowledge and respect for other traditions; the latter is evidence of determined choice for the purpose of focused study, practice and spiritual growth. Therefore, honor all authentic enlightenment traditions, while acknowledging that you cannot possibly adopt all customs, rituals and behaviors common to them. Choose the way that is best for you and allow others the freedom to make their own right choices.

My right choice is the tradition I represent, but I honor all other useful ways. I have learned to see the inner truth which imparts vitality to worthwhile philosophical, religious and enlightenment traditions without being confused by surface appearances or the behaviors of persons who are not yet able to accurately represent a useful way. Many Christians restrict their spiritual growth, either by not learning the esoteric aspects of Christianity or by childishly asserting that truth must be packaged in Christian terminology and creed. Especially is this so with many people who have embraced a relatively new metaphysical emphasis of the *Bible* or have studied one of a number of mental science teachings. They err in thinking they have "found the truth" when, in fact, they are still at a beginning level of study and application. It is often not that they cannot grow spiritually, it is that they have allowed themselves to be self-limited by their own traditional ways of thinking and behaving. Some of them convert to a more exotic "new age" teaching emphasis or join

another religion, but still cling to the outer form of the teaching instead of learning to go deeper, into the essence behind the form.

Even if the right choice is made and the devotee is relating to an enlightenment tradition through which pure teachings and pure energies flow, one must still prepare oneself to understand the teaching and benefit from the spiritual forces which are available. In the Kriya Yoga tradition, I know many who have advanced far on the spiritual path, and I know some who have barely progressed. Those who progress, have learned to be open to growth and the unfoldment of knowledge. Those who have not, remain self-centered and small-minded, deluding themselves that they are secure because of their affiliation.

It is not those who make a show of being on the spiritual path, or who claim membership in an enlightenment tradition who experience spiritual growth. Rather, it is the person who learns to surrender in God and do God's will who is living a righteous life. Everyone is welcome to higher understanding, but one must be sincere, and willing to learn and grow if higher understanding is to be experienced.

From Self-Conscious to Cosmic Consciousness

All states of consciousness higher than the self-conscious state are superconscious in comparison with it. Lower superconsciousness enables the soul to directly experience itself as a spiritual being. This leads to Self-realization, realization of the soul nature. From initial Self-realized states, consciousness can then expand to cosmic conscious states. Higher superconscious states include cosmic consciousness, God consciousness and the experience of pure consciousness. But just as preliminary superconscious states can be influenced by mental and emotional conditions, so preliminary cosmic conscious states can be likewise influenced.

During meditation, one may experience superconsciousness mixed with thoughts and feelings. After meditation, while still functioning somewhat from a superconscious state, mental conditionings can color perceptions and thought processes. This may cause us to ask, "Why is it that I feel like a divine being, but I'm also conscious of my human nature?" Or, "Why does a person who is obviously proficient in superconscious meditation practice, say and do things which seem

less than superconsciously influenced?"

Just as there are degrees of superconscious meditation states, so there are degrees of cosmic consciousness. A spiritual aspirant with a strong ego may actually have a glimpse of cosmic consciousness and mistakenly assume that he is now enlightened, or that he is a messiah, just as a person still working at the level of mental causation may mistakenly assume that he is completely in charge of his destiny now that he understands a few of the mental laws. Again, a person who feels surrendered on the spiritual path may mistakenly assume that everything that happens in his life, including episodes of misfortune, are evidence of God's grace. When circumstances unfold harmoniously he believes that God is blessing him and when troubles manifest he believes that God is testing his faith or providing a learning opportunity. God always blesses, to the degree that we can accept the blessings. God never tests our faith. And misfortune is a learning opportunity, but it is the effect of our own past actions or our present inability to remain fully conscious.

The practice of meditation techniques for the purpose of expanding consciousness is useful preparation for actual cosmic conscious perceptions. All other useful things we do—attention to duties, the cultivation of the virtues, living a balanced life—are also useful as preparation for cosmic conscious perceptions. There have been instances of sudden spiritual awakening, including degrees of cosmic consciousness, without the person having consciously engaged in practices to prepare for the experience. Sometimes the cosmic conscious experience results in a dramatic positive change in a person's life; for with it, higher knowledge is provided. Often, however, persons who have not had prior preparation have a cosmic conscious experience but are not able to maintain it, or to experience it at will. In most instances, persons who have spontaneously experienced cosmic conscious states without prior preparation, have been physically healthy, intellectually competent and usually emotionally mature. This perhaps reveals something to us about ideal conditions for spiritual growth possibilities. With adequate preparation and reasonable knowledge because of prior studies, one who experiences cosmic conscious episodes will be better able to relate to them and learn to experience progressively higher states of consciousness.

Cosmic consciousness is a radical shift of awareness, during

which intuition plays a major role in enabling one to apprehend the operations of consciousness at subtle and fine levels. While a philosophical belief system may be helpful in understanding cosmic conscious states, it may also be that one discovers that understanding becomes so increased that cosmic insights cannot be fitted into the framework of one's personal philosophical views. Once cherished opinions may have to be released and comforting concepts discarded.

It is not uncommon for cosmic conscious episodes to occur at a moment when one is not thinking about the possibility, when effort to expand consciousness is absent. On the other hand, it is possible to prepare mind and consciousness ahead of time, not to cause a cosmic experience, but to allow it to occur.

The cultivation of devotion to God seems to be one of the more compelling conditions for opening one's consciousness. Devotion to God, expressed in both attitude and surrendered attention to duty and work, weakens ego boundaries, allowing the innate inclination of the soul to become more conscious and influential. Cheerful performance of duty and work is evidence of selfless involvement with life processes. Whatever is done is then a spiritual exercise—a pleasant, even joyful, endeavor. Psychological resistance is dissolved, allowing perceptual abilities to be enhanced. A person who is forever struggling, coping, or fighting with circumstances is obviously not open to the flow of life and is functioning at a lower lever of awareness than is ideal for fine perceptions.

Association with cosmic conscious people can elevate us to their level of awareness. This is one reason why enlightenment teachers recommend such association, if not possible on a personal level then on an impersonal one, by mental attunement and sympathetic rapport at the soul level. There are recorded instances of a disciple having been assisted by an enlightened person, so that the disciple's mind could be prepared and his awareness expanded. The guru might touch the disciple at the spiritual eye, or heart chakra, bringing the disciple's vital forces upward and inducing a temporary expanded state of consciousness. Once the disciple learns how to prepare himself, he can do so at will without the aid of the guru.

Sometimes meditation instruction is given to help a disciple remove attention from mental and emotional distractions. One saint, after several years of meditation practice, met a teacher who instructed him in the finer pints of concentration, enabling him to

experience a transcendent state of consciousness after just three days of conscious endeavor. He was instructed to watch his thought processes and whenever a thought would emerge, to refuse to let it fully manifest in his mind. Before long, all mental waves ceased and he experienced profound inner stillness and a feeling of being grounded in the Infinite. It required several more years of conscious practice before awareness of higher reality was permanent.

With even a modest degree of cosmic conscious experience we are able to sense that supreme consciousness is playing all the roles in the field of Nature. We can then more readily comprehend that the universe is a mere play of cosmic forces, of lights and shadows. We are able to discern that order and harmony is the result of the influences of sattwa guna, that movement and transformation is the result of the influences of rajas guna, and that heaviness and inertia is the result of the influences of tamas guna; that these three attributes of consciousness regulate all life processes. We further discern that we can, by choice, remove ourselves from unwanted cosmic influences and choose light over darkness. We are also able to more clearly understand that all people are presently experiencing life according to their personal states of consciousness.

Cosmic consciousness can be experienced by anyone who is capable of experiencing it. This is because the evolutional forces are expressing through all living forms in Nature. Man, with his highly evolved brain and nervous system, is able to experience the next major unfoldment in the evolutionary process—that of awakening from self-consciousness to superconscious and cosmic conscious states. The several men and women who have already experienced cosmic consciousness are the forerunners of what will be the prevailing condition for human beings a few thousand years from now. Devotees on a conscious spiritual growth path, however, need not await a future time to experience expanded states of awareness. They can, by right preparation and the use of Kriya Yoga meditation techniques, create ideal inner conditions through which grace can express to speed up spiritual growth.

I am sharing with you, in these Lessons, all of the practical, useful procedures to use to help yourself to wellness and soul unfoldment. While giving attention to inner preparation, also do your best to live a selfless, pure life. By reading about the saints and learning how to live, cultivate your divine qualities and live as nearly as you can in

the ideal way. By endeavoring to live as we should, as we will when we are enlightened, we not only discover that we are able to perform more effectively than we may have thought, and our initiative draws a response from the universe. When we live with the expectation that the universe will definitely respond to our needs, it will. This is why faith is so important. Faith magnetizes our thoughts and lifts our consciousness to new levels. We then attract to ourselves what is needed and we are better able to see possibilities.

Cosmic consciousness enables us to literally know that "we are in God and God is in us." It enables us to see the universe as a manifestation of God's energies, directed by God's intelligence.

Preliminary cosmic conscious states enable us to know that God is real and even to comprehend to varying degrees the reality of God. Plotinus, second century Greek philosopher, wrote the following in a letter to a friend:

> You ask, how can we know the Infinite? I answer, not by reason. It is the office of reason to distinguish and define. The Infinite, therefore, cannot be ranked among its objects. You can only apprehend the Infinite by a faculty superior to reason, by entering into a state in which you are your finite self no longer—in which the divine essence is communicated to you. This is ecstasy. It is the liberation of your mind from its finite consciousness. Like can only apprehend like; when you thus cease to be finite you become one with the Infinite. In the reduction of your soul to its simplest self, its divine essence, you realize this union—this identity.
>
> But this sublime condition is not of permanent duration. It is only now and then that we can enjoy this elevation (mercifully made possible for us) above the limits of the body and the world...All that tends to purify and elevate the mind, will assist you in this attainment, and will facilitate the approach and recurrence of these happy intervals. There are, then, different roads by which this end may be reached. The love of beauty which exalts the poet; that devotion to the One and that ascent of science which makes the ambition of the philosopher; and that love and those prayers by which some devout and ardent soul tends in its moral purity towards perfection. These are the great highways conducting to that height above the actual and the particular, where we stand in the immediate presence of the Infinite, who shines out as from the deeps of the soul.

St. John of the Cross (Juan Yepes), a Carmelite monk in Spain five hundred years ago, wrote:

> Though it be true, as I have said, that God is always in every soul, bestowing upon it and preserving it, by His presence, its natural being, yet for all this He does not always communicate the supernatural life. For this is given only by love and grace, to which all souls do not attain, and those who do, do not in the same degree, for some rise to higher degrees of love than others. That soul, therefore, has greater communion with God which is most advanced in love—that is, whose will is most conformable to the will of God. And that soul which has reached perfect conformity and resemblance is perfectly united with, and supernaturally transformed in God. For which cause, therefore, as I have already explained, the more the soul cleaves to created things, relying on its own strength, buy habit and inclination, the less it is disposed for this union, because it does not completely resign itself into the hands of God, that He may transform it supernaturally.

Personal Comprehension Review

Use this review opportunity to improve your understanding of the Lesson material and facilitate your practice.

1. Describe the characteristics of the three lower states of human consciousness as experienced by persons who are spiritually unawake.

2. Besides meditation, what else can one do to prepare for cosmic conscious perceptions and continued spiritual growth?

3. What is the only valid proof of an enlightenment teaching?

4. Why is a Kriya Yoga devotee counseled to adhere to "the secret way to God" and not be overly superficial in behavior and relationships?

5. Who is the *true guru*?

6. Why is daily meditation and attention to spiritual practices so necessary on the enlightenment path?

7. What are the eight limiting characteristics of a deluded consciousness and how can they be removed?

8. What are some things you can do to know your own destined purpose in life? Outline these and involve yourself with them.

9. Why should we love others and be supportive of them?

Reflections

Since "Kriya Yoga is practiced to remove all physical and mental obstacles" to soul expression, why is it that some devotees of this path do not always experience the removal of all such obstacles?

It is often that sincere, well-intentioned devotees expect the practice of meditation techniques and other routines to do for them what they need to do for themselves. It is true that superconscious meditation results in beneficial spiritual forces being introduced into the mental field and body, and these have constructive influences to refine the mental field and contribute to improved physical function, but the changes are sometimes gradual. And it is true that constructive changes in mental attitude and behavior are helpful. Often, however, the devotee tends to persist in the assumption that if procedures are adhered to, effects will be forthcoming; that is, one may be somewhat settled in the belief that changes are to occur in the future, instead of being able to accept changes in the present. We hear this expressed: I'm getting there; I know things will get better; I'm on the right track, it's only a matter of time; I'm doing my best but I have a lot of overcoming to do. Then, like any person addicted to attitudes and behaviors, the devotee thinks in terms of long-term recovery from bondage to circumstances. One may even err in choosing to associate with friends and associates who entertain the same attitudes and behaviors; thus, such attitudes and behaviors are reinforced instead of overcome.

Egoism, insecurity, resistance to change even when change is consciously desired, attachment to traditional modes of thinking and behavior, and other psychological characteristics may be influential in preventing spiritual growth. I have known Kriya Yoga devotees who for years have diligently practiced their meditation routines and adhered to "the letter of known principles" who have not experienced much progress on the awakening path. They are still problem-centered, small-minded, emotionally immature, self-serving, and

self-righteous about the fact that they "have found the right path" and are somehow unique because of having done so. But the results of their actions are not self-evident. Except for their intellectual knowledge of metaphysical principles they are just like ordinary people who are not consciously on a self-improvement path.

One of the self-imposed obstacles to spiritual growth is that of becoming too self-centered as a result of practicing meditation techniques and lifestyle routines—by viewing them as ends in themselves instead of as tools to facilitate growth and expansion of consciousness. By remaining self-centered, expansion of consciousness is inhibited. This is why meditation techniques and lifestyle routines need to be understood as helpful aids to growth and function and not necessarily as causes which will produce effects. Use meditation techniques to become focused and still, then discard them and explore higher realities and transcendent states of consciousness. Cultivate lifestyle routines for their benefits while training yourself to function as a more cosmic conscious being.

Cultivate compassion, generosity, even-mindedness, peace of soul, happiness, benevolence, faith, trust in God, and all of the other virtues. Eliminate hard-heartedness, selfishness, restlessness, anxiety, moodiness, prejudice and self-righteousness, fear, doubts about the reality of God, and all of the destructive habits—not by struggling to overcome them, but by renouncing them. Just let them go. Do more of what works and less of what doesn't work. That is the way to prove what you really know. That is the way to actualize your soul capacities and let divine attributes be expressed. Avoid complaining about circumstances, which is characteristic of the unenlightened human condition. Even when it is not easy to do what needs to be done, do it. You will grow spiritually and fulfill your soul destiny.

We should not remain engrossed in impermanent material pleasures, utterly oblivious of the ever-new everlasting blessedness hidden in the soul.

The yogi though indifferent to material desires should not neglect to perform necessary material duties with an attitude of nonattachment. The yogi who loves God can never forget Him during the performance of material duties. One who performs his duties for God is free and nonattached, though he is busy with activities. An unselfish person pursuing material duties with constant remembrance and perception of God is not asleep in ignorance but is ever awake in Him.

The materially active person, ever fixed in God within himself, is not a worldly person but is united with God. Therefore, an individual who loves God deeply can do so both while he is nonactive and silently meditating, or when he is very active with external circumstances. It is good to be ever awake in God during all hours and conditions of life. One should never become so deeply engrossed in material duties as to be oblivious to the contact of bliss in meditation.

Paramahansa Yogananda

Front Cover Photo: Scene at Chousatti Ghat (bathing site) on the Ganges River in Benares, India. This place was frequented by Lahiri Mahasaya, whose home was located less than 100 yards distant.

Live as a Spiritual Being

You are Already Divine, Express It

How would you live if you consciously knew the potential within you? Search your soul to become more aware of your true abilities. Read about the saints and learn how they think and live. Then renounce immaturity and bondage to psychological, physical, and environmental conditions and express your innate divine capacities.

Instead of thinking about "becoming like that," *be* like that. You are already divine. You already have all the ability you need. Divinity and ability only need to be actualized—expressed and made real by personal demonstration. Sit at the feet of the Master (God in whatever aspect) with a surrendered heart, then awaken, arise, and demonstrate the Master consciousness.

To do this requires spiritual boldness, not egocentric willfulness. Just admit to yourself who and what you are and let the real essence of you bear witness to your clear realization.

– Roy Eugene Davis

CENTER FOR SPIRITUAL AWARENESS
STUDIES IN TRUTH LESSON GUIDE
MASTER COURSE NUMBER ELEVEN

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The Portal of Initiation

CHOOSING THE WAY OF LIFE ETERNAL

My mind, kindle within thee the flame of love for the Lord. They become free who take refuge with loving surrender at his feet. *KABIR (16th century)*

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Initiation, as a conversion experience, marks the beginning of a devotee's complete turning to God. The inner significance of initiation lies in the fact that, ever after, the way of surrendered discipleship remains the compelling focus of the initiate's life.

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To seers, the human body is a precious vehicle through which higher purposes are served. Because of this, procedures have been known and taught for the purpose of nourishing the body, for the purpose of allowing full soul expression. Here are some insights.

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Direct, full realization of God is the focus of a true devotee's spiritual practice. All preliminary realizations are but preparation for God-realization—and what follows.

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I think the soul will never stop, or attain to any growth beyond which it shall not go. When I walked at night by the seashore and looked up at the countless stars, I asked of my soul whether it would be filled and satisfied when it should become God enfolding all these and the answer was plain to me: No, when I reach there, I shall want to go further still.

WALT WHITMAN (1819-1892)
Notebooks

Let them recognize that there are two kinds of people one can call reasonable: those who serve God with all their heart because they know Him, and those who seek Him with all their heart because they do not know Him.

BLAISE PASCAL (1623-1662)
Pensées

The Portal of Initiation
CHOOSING THE WAY OF LIFE ETERNAL

A formal act of initiation is "the ritualization of spiritual or social transformation." In some cultures rites are performed to transform adolescents into adults or to make consenting adults members of a special group. Confirmation in Christianity, the Bar Mitzvah of Judaism, and the giving of the Sacred Thread to young boys in Hinduism, are all recognized initiations of a kind.

Spiritually, the significance of initiation lies in the centering of oneself in conformity with divine order and in God. One then dies to the lower self and is reborn in the spiritual sense. Initiation is literally a "new beginning" of a higher order. The initiate is encouraged to put off old ways of doing things and adopt new and better ones.

Christians have the example of Jesus, who accepted the rites of initiation at the hands of John the Baptist, went into seclusion for a duration, then began his teaching mission. In yogic tradition, formal initiation is an occasion of instruction and blessing so that the new disciple may pursue his spiritual practices correctly and be imbued with the grace of spiritual power transmitted during the initiation rites. In most cultural and religious traditions it is understood that the dynamics of initiation are those of the activity of the spirit of

God—the outer ceremonies or routines merely serving to support and encourage the process.

The decision to pass through the portal leading to a new way of life must be one of personal choice and commitment, or else the rites are mere drama without power in themselves to accomplish vital purposes. Every time we experience definite psychological and spiritual growth and give ourselves over to the results of transformation, we in fact experience initiation into a higher sphere of operation and experience. Actually, with spiritual initiation, one is asked to henceforth discard all external supports and rely only upon God, using intelligence and understood ways of living, of course, but leaving the results to providence. The ego is asked to cease being dominant so that divine qualities can unfold.

While initiation can occur as a result of inner transformation, it cannot be forced by outside persuasion. One can be invited to experience initiation, but promotion for the purpose of recruiting simply will not work because to appeal to ego needs is to miss the point entirely. I am occasionally contacted by individuals who inform me they were persuaded by friends to accept initiation offered by a person or group, then soon afterwards realized they had made a mistake. They either had not been prepared for the experience or it was not the right relationship for them. Their question is, "I pledged my loyalty and made certain promises that I cannot keep. Now, what do I do?" What one can do under such circumstances is to withdraw from affiliation with that relationship, admit to having erred in judgment and be resolved to be more prudent in the future.

The best preparation for initiation is responsible living, the cultivation of the moral virtues and examination of the meaning of life. While hardly anyone is completely self-actualized and emotionally mature at the time of formal initiation, these conditions will enable one to make better choices and follow through with the commitment one makes during initiation. The better the preparation, the more satisfying will be the results.

With preparation, three further requirements are essential: *honesty, commitment,* and *submission to God's* will. Without honesty there will be inner conflict, mental confusion and unregulated behavior—conditions which are in conflict with conscious, intentional living. And one cannot be a true disciple of God if one cannot be conscious and intentional. Commitment to the spiritual path should

be total. This does not mean that the person requesting initiation must be entirely proficient in everything he does; only that he be willing to do his very best to live an ideal life and continue on the spiritual path. Submission to God's will means to let self-will be replaced by acceptance of what is right in all circumstances. It means to conform to the higher way in order to be removed from the lower one. An initiate who aspires to spiritual growth and God-realization should renounce small-minded, self-centered, trivial thinking and behavior. *Trivial* ("of little importance, insignificant") attitudes and behaviors reflect a preoccupation with nonessentials, which is the opposite of what should be the determining factor in a devotee's life.

Kriya Yoga Initiation

Before applying for initiation into Kriya Yoga one should prepare by studying the supporting philosophy, do one's best to live according to the recommended guidelines, be self-honest about the decision to be made and be prepared to commit one's life to the spiritual path. Recommended reading includes the *Yoga Sutras* and the *Bhagavad Gita*, along with the scripture of one's religious faith.

Persons who request initiation from me are asked to study these Lessons and my basic books, especially *Life Surrendered in God* and *Light on the Spiritual Path*. Paramahansa Yogananda's *Autobiography of a Yogi* should also be read to provide a more complete background of the tradition.

I cannot overemphasize the importance of advance preparation. Many people approach me and ask to be initiated into Kriya Yoga and have not even read the above books, much less been involved in a regular routine of self-care and meditation. They sometimes think that because they are sincere, or because they have been reading a variety of metaphysical books, that they are ready for initiation. Many request initiation because they think it will be a magic door to almost instant spiritual growth. Some are merely curious. Many have good intentions but have no sense of commitment and will not follow through with practice after initiation. Some innocently assume that Kriya Yoga is just one more of many simplistic metaphysical systems. They do not know that our emphasis is total commitment to righteous living and God-realization.

Kriya Yoga initiation is offered here at Center for Spiritual Awareness headquarters and retreat center at regular intervals,

usually during weeklong programs, and occasionally in various regions of the United States and in other countries when I travel.

During the initiation service I review basic philosophical principles and the basic meditation procedures, then teach the technique of Kriya Pranayama and supplemental techniques. During the final phase of the program participants are invited to approach the altar to make their commitment to God. They are provided a fresh flower, a piece of fruit and an envelope for their participation. These are reverently placed on a small table before the altar. The flower symbolizes their devotion to God. The fruit symbolizes the fruits, the results, of their actions which they henceforth offer to God. The envelope contains their monetary offering to maintain and support the ministry and symbolizes their commitment to use their resources wisely.

They then stand before me for a moment. I share a quiet blessing by touching their spiritual eye and knowing for them their inner perfection and seeing them in the flow of God's grace.

Paramahansaji told me, "Whenever you, or others (other disciples of his), initiate into Kriya Yoga, I or one of the gurus will be there." In the Kriya Yoga tradition it is understood that the person who facilitates the initiation ceremony is but representing the guru line through which the teaching and spiritual force flows. It is important that the guru or teacher be aware of this and be as pure-hearted and open to the flow as possible.

It is understood that when conditions are ideal, when the devotee is inwardly surrendered to God and the environment is supportive, a special quality of consciousness-force is present which beneficially influences the person being initiated. The instruction is imbued with this force and dormant energies are awakened in the devotee. If there is attunement with the teaching tradition and the guru line the devotee thereafter can inwardly feel the connection and be supported in his practice and in his life.

Initiation into Kriya Yoga should not be considered to be the culmination of study and preparation. It is, in fact, but the beginning of a longer, more committed involvement with spiritual growth processes.

Unfortunately, many people who are initiated and who are sincere at the time of initiation, soon disregard their studies and neglect meditation practice. Sometimes they become overly involved

in outer relationships and activities, become preoccupied with psychological problems, or err in thinking that now that they have been initiated there is nothing more to learn. Or, they mix what they have learned with a variety of other theories and practices, thinking themselves to be open-minded when, in fact, they are merely restless and without meaningful purpose.

Paramahansaji was aware of this situation. He was generous in sharing with people and willing to teach and initiate them. Of those who departed from the Kriya Yoga path he said, "At least some spiritual seeds have been planted and they have had the benefit of the inner contact. It would have been better had they remained loyal to the path. They would then have the benefit of our support and encouragement."

He once said, "Many people come to us and are very happy when we give them attention. After they are initiated, they leave us, thinking that they have graduated and there is nothing more to learn. It is not fair for them or for us. They do not have our support when they need it most and we do not have the benefit of their fellowship." It is for this reason that just before he made his transition he instructed members of his organization to be more discerning when examining persons requesting initiation.

Over the years I have met hundreds of people who were initiated into Kriya Yoga by Paramahansaji or one of his disciples who were living purposeless lives. Some had fallen away from their studies and practices. Some had returned to the fellowship of a traditional church. Some were involved with spiritualism or presumed communication with "ascended" masters. Some were struggling with relationships or the general routine of living. Some were shopping around for another guru relationship. Some were attempting to work out their own salvation by discovering their own personal philosophy of life. None of them were attending to the basic routines of practical, righteous living or were regular in prayer and meditation practice.

When we commit our lives to God, that commitment should be total. What we do thereafter should reflect it. If it does not, we are not entirely committed. We cannot be said to be dedicated if our attitude is, "God, you can have part of my life, but not all of it."

A donation of some kind is requested at the time of initiation. This is not payment for initiation because the inner process is not directly related to outer procedure. The devotee's donation represents his

open attitude, his willingness to share his life and his resources in a selfless way. The donation may be nominal or it may be substantial, according to the devotee's means and attitude. The guru or teacher is not financially compensated for his role in the initiation process. Donations are used for charitable purposes. If the initiation opportunity is made available by an organization or ministry, the donation will be used to maintain the work and provide services to others. If the guru or teacher is not representing an organized ministry, the donation will be given to a deserving person or an organization which does charitable work.

Mahavatar Babaji instructed Lahiri Mahasaya to accept donations from Kriya Yoga initiates. The money was then used to feed poor people, for social work, to maintain places of worship, and to provide religious festivals to infuse spirituality into communities. A basic spiritual principle is that giving is essential to spiritual growth. Enlightenment cannot be purchased, but neither is it likely to be experienced by a person whose mind is closed to the practical necessity of giving.

Conscious, Eternal Life
is Our Destined Experience

We already have eternal life but not everyone is conscious of it. When we are fully aware, when influential restrictions are removed, then conscious, eternal life is experienced. Whether it is experienced sooner than later depends upon the choices we make. It is a destined experience and destiny can be cooperated with or delayed. It cannot be ultimately avoided, although it can be avoided during any one or several incarnations. Sometimes it is avoided because we are reluctant to surrender to it. At other times it is delayed because of involvement with restricting circumstances.

The most useful way to quickly awaken to conscious, eternal life is to attend to all known duties correctly and to be so inwardly surrendered to God that you are willing to allow spiritual growth episodes to occur. With surrender, kundalini forces become aroused, directed by the soul's innate intelligence and moving through the body to transform and regenerate it. This force, ascending through the chakras to the higher brain centers, releases the soul's attachment to matter and sensory urges and liberates consciousness. Kundalini may be awakened by surrender to God, devotion,

pranayama, meditation, religious contemplation, aspiration to experience liberation, association with saints, and at the time of initiation. Once obviously awakened, it may move from time to time during the day, especially during prayerful contemplation and meditation, or constantly. Except when meditating, when kundalini may be worked with intentionally, it can be allowed to express as it is directed by innate intelligence. In this way it will spontaneously act to bring about needed changes in a gradual but steady way. Once it begins to move, unless it is suppressed, it will carry out its transforming work without interruption.

Kundalini is sometimes referred to as the serpent power because, in Eastern folklore, serpents are assumed to be wise as well as subtle in movements. Therefore, awakened kundalini, your own soul force, circulates in the body in subtle ways and as the result of clearing consciousness, confers wisdom.

The inner transformative work should be supported by our lifestyle, regular meditation and other self-help routines, and devotion to God. Kundalini is nothing less than the spirit of God in our body temples. With increasing awareness, as a result of inner restrictions being removed or transcended, our powers of perception improve. Our creative abilities are enhanced. Intelligence is unveiled. Intuition awakens. Soul capacities such as clairvoyance, prophecy, and knowledge of subjective aspects of life processes may unfold. These are sometimes referred to as the "gifts of the spirit of God." They are natural endowments of an enlightened mind. They can sometimes express through a mind which is not yet pure, so their initial manifestation is not proof of enlightenment.

The proof of spiritual awareness is how well we are living our lives and how responsive we are to serving the needs of others. If we are possessed of understanding, our understanding will be revealed by the way we live.

God's will, ultimately, is the transformation of matter and the spiritual awakening and liberation of souls; therefore, our lives should be dedicated to these ends. There are practical, relative matters to be attended to, of course, but these are routine and incidental to higher purposes. The redemptive move of the spirit of God is insistently moving through creation and through even spiritually unawakened persons, but moves more freely when harmonious environmental conditions are provided and individuals are

consciously cooperative. When we are not psychologically well, just as we may engage in self-defeating behaviors, so we may damage the environment. Respect for one's environment and reverence for life are signs of spiritual awareness. Our planet is fragile and must be nurtured. Sharing our world are countless souls which share a common origin and a common destiny in God. Just as we are motivated to help ourselves to spiritual growth, so we should be lovingly concerned about the spiritual growth of others—those we know personally and those who are not personally known to us.

Initiation is the point of departure from conditioned ways of thinking and behaving and entry into an entirely different way of viewing ourselves and our world. An initiate's way is not the way of escaping from responsibilities, but of being responsible as inner guidance and common sense determines. We do not expect much of those who are not informed or who are presently incapable. Of an initiate on the spiritual path, all things possible are expected.

If you are a Kriya Yoga initiate I hope you are 100 percent surrendered in God and dedicated to continued spiritual growth and useful service. If you are seriously contemplating entering the portal of initiation, you are invited to come through it to the inner chamber. If you have been applying the principles taught in these Lessons and have been meditating on a regular schedule, you may request an application form from our offices so that initiation into Kriya Yoga may be arranged at a convenient time. If at all possible, this should be experienced here at Center for Spiritual Awareness headquarters or whenever I visit a place convenient to you. If necessary, initiation can be arranged with one of our authorized teachers. It can also be done by our sending an audio cassette tape recording of an initiation service which you can use in the privacy of your home. Whenever possible, it is recommended that personal instruction be arranged.

If you are a student or initiate of another enlightenment tradition, be faithful to the teachings and practices of your tradition, using the information shared in these Lessons to support your lifestyle and spiritual growth.

The important matter is to discover God's way for you, then be true to it. God is the true guru, the life of your life, the intelligence of your intelligence, the knowledge of your knowledge, the being of your being. Remember this.

Whatever a man fears may happen to him is only a matter of probability—either it will happen or it will not happen. And just as it is possible that something painful, worrisome and fearful may happen, it is also possible that, because of his reliance upon God, the reverse of what he feared may happen. *MAIMONIDES (1135-1204)*
Preservation of Youth

So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is they sting? O grave where is they victory? *1 CORINTHIANS 15:54, 55*

Lifestyle Guidelines
HEALTHY, LONG LIFE WITH PURPOSE

Since our physical bodies are enlivened by soul force, the same force that enlivens the universe, and comprises the elements which form the universe, it should be no cause for surprise to learn that methods are available for rejuvenating the body and contributing to healthy, long life with purpose.

The major reasons for decay of the body are lack of spiritual awareness, psychological causes, stress, toxicity, genetic influences and karmic factors. All of these contributing influences can be confronted and, to a considerable degree, weakened and overcome. Ayurvedic procedures have long been researched and applied with varying degrees of success, to promote rejuvenation, retard biological aging processes and encourage longevity.

In this approach, emphasis is placed on the importance of spiritual awareness, because of the understanding that psychological, physical, and lifestyle conditions are reflections of states of consciousness. Therefore, any approach to wellness is incomplete if the importance of God-realization is omitted. It is possible, when working with a person who is not inclined toward practices helpful to spiritual growth, to restore health and wellness to some degree, but the deeper and more subtle causes of possible future complications would not be addressed and eliminated. Our emphasis is upon health and long life for the purpose of fulfilling soul destiny, not merely to

assist persons to continue in a routine of conditioned or self-defeating behavior. Many of the regimens explained here can be useful to such persons but our present emphasis will be to encourage devotees on the spiritual path to learn to help themselves to total wellness in order to realize their highest potential.

Secrets of the Mortal-Immortals

For centuries, in different cultures and various parts of the world, stories have come down to us of unusual people who have transcended normal boundaries of human experience by living healthy, long lives far beyond what is customary. From India and China, especially, such stories have origins. In his book *Autobiography of a Yogi*, Paramahansaji wrote about Mahavatar Babaji: "The secluded master has retained his physical form for centuries, perhaps for millenniums. The deathless guru bears no marks of age on his body; he appears to be a youth of no more than twenty-five. Fair-skinned, of medium build and height, Babaji's beautiful strong body radiates a perceptible glow. His undecayable body requires no food."

It is known that Babaji has several times undergone a radical rejuvenation process known as *kaya kalpa*, which enables the body to "span the ages." In a published account by Swami Pranabananda, a disciple of Lahiri Mahasaya the following story is told:

Pranabananda was visiting his guru in Varanasi and was surprised to see Lahiri go out to the courtyard and bow before a youthful sage. Lahiri asked his disciple to also acknowledge the visitor, whom he introduced as Mahavatar Babaji. Even though Babaji appeared to be much younger than Lahiri, Lahiri often frequently referred to him as "the old father," because of Babaji's many years of the planet. During the conversation Pranabananda asked Babaji how old he was. Babaji replied that one hundred and twenty years was the normal span of life but that one could extend physical life by undergoing the kaya kalpa regimen. He further mentioned that he had done so several times. This incident occurred in the latter years of the 19th century.

Rejuvenation regimens are used by some yogis and seers to extend the physical life cycle so they can fulfill special purposes: to complete their spiritual growth or to complete tasks entrusted to them by providence—the guardianship of God over His creation.

Some of these procedures are now more widely known. Ayurvedic rejuvenation procedures have little value unless the participant is involved with spiritual practices. Freedom from bodily discomfort and disease enables one to fulfill worthy purposes with vital forces used for entirely regenerative and creative possibilities.

In the late 1930's, the secular in India, Europe and America carried news of an Indian yogi who had thrice undergone the kaya kalpa process. The first time he did so he was over eighty years of age, feeble and exhausted because of his arduous disciplines and extended walking pilgrimages. He met a person knowledgeable in the use of these procedures and consented to undergo them. After several weeks he emerged from his seclusion, appearing at least thirty years younger, restored to full vigor, with new dark hair, keen eyesight and hearing and an attractive physique. He had also grown a full third set of new teeth. During his remaining one hundred years he experienced the process twice more before consciously leaving his body in a meditative state.

While in seclusion, most of which was spent in deep meditation, he often communed with saints who visited him in their subtle forms. He admitted, that while body cleansing and the use of certain herbal substances had been helpful, the most regenerative influences were those resulting from repeated and prolonged superconscious states.

There are some enlightened persons who know their destiny and are so open to superconscious realms that they can merely *will* to be healthy and can decide how many years they will maintain the body. Such enlightened souls know themselves to be expressions of the spirit of God and that the body is to be used for divinely intended purposes. Some of them can remove awareness from the body at will, to function on inner planes. Two years prior to his *mahasamadhi* ("great samadhi," a yogi's conscious exit from the body), Paramahansaji advised one disciple not to bother him with petty details of his personal life, saying, "You should take care of your own small problems. I have more work on the inner planes these days than I do in this world."

Because an extremely long-lived person has a mission which extends over centuries and has no karmic ties with the world, it is common for him or her to remain in seclusion, accessible to only a few special people, or if active in an outer way, to relocate and assume a different name every several decades. The reason for this is to be able

to continue their divinely appointed work without attracting undue public notice.

Because discomfort and disease interfere with our ability to fulfill purposes, all who are desirous of assisting spiritual growth and self-actualization should be taking steps to ensure the removal of inner and outer restrictions and latent causes of possible future problems.

Esoteric Keys to the Rejuvenation Process

Inner understanding provides insight into bodily rejuvenation and life extension procedures. An objective study alone will result in superficial, though useful, discoveries. It is important to remember that the universe is one organic whole and that our bodies are part of the universe. Just as God is our larger spiritual reality, the universe is our larger physical body. The forces that flow through the universe flow through us and the energies currently expressing as our bodies are the same energies which emerged into spacetime billions of years ago when the universe was manifested. Just as we can say that there is but one life, God, and all life-expressions are God-expressing, so we can say that there is but one body, the universe, and all material forms are expressions of it.

When contemplating the matter of rejuvenation we need to think in terms of arranging conditions so that the all-enlivening vital force of God flowing through the universe can flow through our bodies, to cleanse and renew. Over the centuries various dietary and therapeutic regimens have been suggested for the purpose of maintaining wellness. Many of them, although useful, are but relatively short-term expedients, result-producing to some degree but not able to result in complete and lasting benefits. Unless the enlivening influences of Nature, the creative forces from the source, are understood and cooperated with, outer procedures will almost always be limited in their effectiveness.

Enlightened practitioners of regenerative processes know what most people do not know: that man is not a body only, but a ray of God's light identified with mind and body. A person who is highly Self-realized will spontaneously live in accord with laws of Nature and avoid involvements which might contribute to the disturbance of inner balance.

A little known saint who lived for one hundred and thirty-five

years and who underwent transition in Nepal, in 1963, was the gentleman known as the Shivapuri Baba ("the holy father who lives in the Shivapuri Forest"). During the first third of his life, over twenty-five years were spent living in total seclusion in a remote jungle retreat, contemplating the meaning of life and meditating. He later undertook a world pilgrimage, walking 60 percent of the way across the Middle East, Europe, the Americas, Asia and China, before returning to India, then to Nepal. That journey was made over a forty year span. The remainder of his years were spent in seclusion also, but this time he was receptive to visitors if they were sincerely interested in spiritual growth.

Versed in the scriptures and established in God-realization, the saint taught a simple way of life, based on attention given to spiritual, moral and bodily disciplines. In short, he taught that one should unfailingly continue with spiritual practices until full realization is experienced, cultivate the moral virtues, and attend to practical matters to ensure bodily health—all this, while serving the world in useful ways. Once, when commenting on his own long life, he mentioned that it was possible, by living a natural life and by regulating breathing, to live many hundreds of years, even a thousand or more. Of all useful aids to bodily regeneration, the major "medicine" is the creative current which enlivens the body when inner restrictions have been removed.

Before undergoing a program designed to result in rejuvenation of the body, one should first become familiar with the principles upon which the procedure is based. One should also have the help of a qualified practitioner while the process is being experienced. The practitioner-helper should be well versed in the procedures, be an example of moral and spiritual virtues, and be able to accurately diagnose the needs of the patient-client as well as to prescribe specific regimens. A thorough examination should be made, so that the subject's basic constitutional type is known and all special needs are observed and met.

Therapeutic regimens should be prescribed and administered in accord with individual requirements. Because of the different basic governing constitutional influences, individual needs will vary greatly and the approach chosen will necessarily depend upon personal circumstances. The purpose of the rejuvenation program is to encourage the balancing of governing principle influences; for this,

specific processes must be prescribed and followed. A person who is predominantly a Water-Fire constitutional type, for instance, would not respond favorably to a program better suited for a person with a different basic constitutional nature. So long as procedures are correctly followed there will be no harmful side effects. There will only be excellent results or less than excellent results, depending upon how well the appropriate procedures are chosen and used, and depending upon the patient-client's mental, emotional and spiritual states.

The Sanskrit word for the procedures used is *rasayana* (rah-sigh-yah-na). *Rasa* means taste, elixir, juice, or essence; *ayana* means "to circulate through pathways to the home or abode." It is a means of restoring the immune system so that body fluids circulate and find their way to the right places in perfect harmony. This procedure not only restores the immune system to full strength, it also removes waste matter from the body, cleanses the mental field, and refines the brain structure and nervous system. The body's ability to assimilate food is improved so that when food is ingested it is properly utilized and transformed in successive stages to provide healthy tissues. An ayurvedic explanation is:

> Rasayana is possessed of inconceivable and wonderful possibilities, being promotive of longevity and health, preservation of youth, dispersive of somnolence (drowsiness and sleep), torpor, fatigue, exhaustion, indolence and weakness, restorative of the balance of the governing principle influences, curative of flabbiness, stimulative of the internal gastric fire and promotive of luster, complexion and voice.

Chastity is recommended during the procedure, so that vital forces can be transmuted into finer essence to nourish deeper levels in the body, and to avoid emotional changes.

The usual rejuvenation schedule lasts twenty-eight days, timed in harmony with the lunar cycle and generally started during the change of seasons when the body's basic constitution normally undergoes changes due to environmental influences. A general program can be undergone which is moderate in application and will not unduly interfere with a person's normal schedule. A more intensive program requires that the subject remain in strict seclusion

for the duration of the treatment. The secluded environment should be located where the climate is moderate and where the patient-client can be isolated from any and all social involvements. The abode should be of even temperature, absolutely quiet, and with necessary conveniences. There should be no possibility of intrusion of any kind and no communication with the outside world, except for daily visits by the practitioner-helper. Total retreat and complete rest is basic to the process.

Before starting the program one undergoes various necessary physical purification procedures, depending upon the need. These may included a cleansing diet before the onset of the program, then more specific procedures which may include purging of the intestinal tract and colon and procedures for removing toxins and normal body wastes of any kind. The theory is that if the body is cleansed as completely as possible, nutrients will be more easily utilized and available life force will be more directly involved in the regeneration processes.

While bodily cleansing is important to the procedure, other factors are also essential, as the following excerpt from the *Charaka Samhita* discloses:

> One who speaks the truth, one who is free from anger, who abstains from alcohol and sexual congress, hurts no one, avoids overstrain, is tranquil of heart, fair-spoken, is devoted to holy chants and to cleanliness, is endowed with understanding, given to alms-giving, diligent in spiritual pursuits, delights in reverencing the gods...teachers, seniors and elders, is attached to harmlessness and is always compassionate, moderate and balanced in his waking and sleeping, is given to regular taking of proper nutrients, is conversant with the influences of climate, the right seasons and choices of foods and herbs, versed in propriety, devoid of egotism, blameless of conduct, given to wholesome eating, spiritual in temperament and attached to believers who are self-controlled and devoted to scriptural texts, such a one should be known as one enjoying the benefits of vitalization therapy constantly. If one who is endowed with all these qualities makes use of vitalization therapy, that person will realize all the benefits.

Two rejuvenation procedures are recommended: One for persons

whose needs are minimal and wish to maintain their regular daily routine; the other for persons whose needs are more extreme. For the more intensive program, while the patient-client is observed daily by the attending helper, who does not talk unless absolutely necessary but provides only essential provisions and necessary advice, the atmosphere is one of total isolation. To assist body processes, Hatha Yoga and pranayama may be practiced; otherwise, complete rest and deep meditation are the rule. Rest allows the body to be renewed and meditation purifies the mind and introduces fine superconscious forces into the body to do the regenerative work.

– to be continued

The one soul in the midst of this world—
This surely is the fire which has entered
into the ocean.
Only by knowing him does one pass over
death.
This whole world is illumined with his
light. *SVETVATAR UPANISHAD*

When you have lifted up the son of man, then shall you know that I am he, and I do nothing of myself; but as God has taught me, I speak these things. And he that sent me is with me: God has not left me alone; for I always do those things which please him.
THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO SAINT JOHN 8:28, 29

God Consciousness
THE SECOND STAGE OF HIGHER REALIZATION

While cosmic conscious states provide degrees of understanding of God and occasional experiences of direct God communion, beyond the boundaries of cosmic consciousness the soul awakens fully in God. The soul then knows itself, not as God's reflected light, but as the light itself.

Just as in self-conscious, superconscious and cosmic conscious states, degrees of awareness may vary, so there can be degrees of God conscious experience. A partially God conscious soul does not know everything about God, any more than an unenlightened person living in the self-conscious state knows everything about the human condition. One can experience partial God consciousness and still be functioning with mental conditionings when not absorbed in meditative contemplation. We should not, therefore, assume that a person who experiences degrees of God consciousness when meditating, and who is aware of the reality of God when not meditating, is omniscient or perfected in God-realization. Only when our habitual states of consciousness are similar to those of others, can we know their true inner condition.

True seers can discern the inner condition of others but they do not make comparisons. They see all souls for what they are: reflected lights of God consciousness functioning at various levels of aware-

ness. They know that a "sinner" is a sleeping saint and that a saint is a being destined for liberation of consciousness. While working with people in relative spheres a spiritual master, while aware of the inner conditionings of unawakened people, sees all souls as pure and knows that all souls have the same potential.

Once, on a visit to India, I was at the ashram of a saint. A devotee entered the room and moved to touch the saint's feet, a gesture of respect to holy people in that country. The saint stopped him and gently said, "You don't have to do that. You are the same as I am." At other times, he would allow devotees to touch his feet if the gesture was meaningful to them. It is also believed that touching a saint's body can result in a transfer of subtle spiritual force which is beneficial to the devotee. And to see a saint is an opportunity to receive a blessing, if one is receptive. In India, it is the custom for devotees to gather at an ashram or temple just to be in a saint's presence.

"The one soul in the midst of this world" is God. Since we are reflected lights of God's consciousness, God is the only soul, the only being. "The fire which has entered into the ocean" is the life that has involved itself with the field of primal Nature. By knowing our God nature we rise above death, the episodes of transition through states of consciousness. Being God-realized there is nothing higher to realize this side of the unmanifest field of pure consciousness.

When "the son of man," our human sense, is elevated and transcended, then we can know our divine nature. We will then do nothing of ourselves; we will have no self-will, but will only do those things which are impelled of God; that is, we will only do God's will. Even when speaking of higher reality, when grounded in God-realization our words will flow from God. Thus, the teachings of fully enlightened seers are the very teachings of God.

When in conditioned states of consciousness words of truth may be difficult to comprehend. Even if comprehended, if self-consciousness is dominant, they may be challenging to the human condition. Hence, these words in the *Bhagavad Gita*:

> Let a man be elevated by contemplation on the Supreme Reality which exists within himself. For the person who has conquered human nature as a result of contemplation, the inmost Reality is a friend. But for the person who has not

> realized his true spiritual nature, the inmost Life will seem to be an enemy. When one has overcome the tendencies of his human condition and has attained to the calm of self-mastery, he is anchored in the awareness of his true nature and in the midst of dualities he is at peace.

Surrendered devotees rejoice to hear words of truth. They love to be reminded of higher reality and they appreciate clear teachings and specific guidance on the spiritual path. Unsurrendered persons may resist words of truth. They may feel threatened because they are not yet ready to change their behaviors. They may want to continue in their present ways, or they may want to learn just enough to improve upon their self-determined mode of living.

To an unawakened person truth teachings may seem to be nonsense. To a partially awakened person truth teachings may be "interesting." To a self-conscious person truth teachings may be welcomed so long as they serve ego-motivated purposes. To a disciple on the spiritual path truth teachings are like nectar, sweet and nourishing. More awakened souls who are exploring cosmic conscious possibilities use truth teachings to facilitate their continued spiritual growth.

It is of vital importance that a sincere devotee have access to accurate information about the nature of consciousness and ways to Self-realization. Spiritual growth can be a subtle process which requires a surrendered heart and keen intelligence. Even clear truth teachings must be carefully examined and their inner meaning discerned. Because not all truth teachers are fully enlightened, their words may be conditioned by their own conceptual ideas or prejudiced views. Even if fully enlightened, words alone may be inadequate for the transmission of their realization. Therefore, learn to get behind the written and spoken word to that which inspired them. Get to the consciousness, the realm of truth itself, from which knowledge arises.

Also, enlightened teachers often teach at different levels, according to the need and receptivity of the student. To a disciple who is passive, the teacher might say, "You should be more active, more focused, more goal-oriented." To a disciple who is too outwardly involved, the teacher might say, "You need to be more calm, more centered." To a disciple who is emotionally devotional, the instruc-

tion might be, "Let your feelings go inside. Cultivate your intellect." To one who is irresponsible, the advice may be, "Get involved in meaningful work." A person who is, even with good intentions, trying too hard to "help the world," the message might be, "Don't try so hard. Let God take care of his own creation." These are not conflicting teachings; they are instructions to meet specific needs at specific times.

Different aspects of the Godhead may be perceived and experienced during preliminary God conscious states. God may be perceived as light, as power, as cosmic existence with attributes. There is always a sense of certainty when experiencing God—a clear awareness that God is the higher reality which makes possible relative manifestations. A devotee may experience bliss, sheer joy of discovery and being. But God's attributes are not the totality of God, so the devotee should not be satisfied with such perceptions. There is no intellectual method, no act of personal will, that can reveal the totality of God. What can result in complete God consciousness is yearning to know, intention and surrender to redeeming grace.

Until direct God perception is experienced, one may have a loving relationship with God, sensing benevolence and awesome power and thereby being assured of the relationship. The Godhead remains ever what it is: the seat of power and creative potential. The aspect of God directly involved with universal processes, while omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent, fulfills divine intentions. Christian mystics refer to this aspect of God as the Christ consciousness. A Hindu might refer to it as Krishna consciousness. The ruling aspect is referred to as Lord of the universe or Iswara. Sri Yukteswar's monastic name means "united with Iswara," the controlling intelligence-power of God. The vibratory frequency of this aspect of God's conscious manifestation is discerned as a dark blue color by a meditator.

Many people who do not practice any intentional spiritual disciplines but who have faith in God and who love God, often sense a "presence" which is supportive of them. They find as they trust in it, they are guided to make right choices and perform right actions, their personal needs are easily met and their heartfelt prayers are answered. They may even personalize the presence they sense by conceiving it to be their Heavenly Father, Divine Mother, the Christ, Krishna, or whatever form of God satisfies their heart. Through their

conceptualized ideal of God and by simple faith, they experience a direct flow of inspiration and frequent evidence of grace. A devotee on the enlightenment path can continue in such a relationship with God while, at the same time, persist in meditative contemplation and be open to higher realizations. In time, more complete knowledge of God will unfold and one will understand the processes of soul growth. One should not reject the understanding of God they have, but be willing to transcend it.

Knowledge of God and a degree of experience of God can be had through the mind, when the mental field is clear. This is because soul light can then shine in the mind, illumining it. So long as we are embodied, the ideal is to let as much divine light shine through the mind as is possible. Just as superconscious states can become dominant in the mental field, so higher realization can become dominant in the mental field. As this occurs, increasing manifestations of divine light and power are expressed through the mind and body. In this way, the reality of God is made more obvious in the collective consciousness of human beings and radiates into planetary consciousness. This is the avatar manifestation, the descent of God's reality into the realm of matter.

A God Conscious Meditation Process

After sitting for an extended duration in superconscious meditation, as you begin to come out of meditation retain your awareness of pure consciousness and your realization of God. Let this be integrated with mental processes, feelings, and body awareness. Retain your awareness of being, your awareness of God, and your awareness of the attributes of God. Let these be present as you remain as a witness to your thoughts, feelings and body processes. Feel the reality of God becoming more influential in your mind and body. Feel the reality of God flowing out into the environment. You do not need to direct the flow or use God's power in any way. Just let it flow.

The idea is to maintain your clear realization of God, along with cosmic consciousness, at all times, no matter what you are doing. You will then find that your thought processes are well-ordered, you are settled in understanding, the physical body is vitalized, right relationships unfold and right actions are performed spontaneously. Do this, and let God be glorified through your mind, personality, body,

and actions. You will no longer have to wonder what God's will for you is, for grace will take care of everything.

Helping Ourselves to "Let" God's Will be Done

As you experience spiritual growth and become increasingly surrendered to higher influences, your priorities may change. You may continue with your relationships and activities but with more insight and improved abilities to function. You may decide to let go of certain relationships and behaviors because they are no longer useful to higher purposes. You will have to attend to your duties, of course, but you will not allow yourself to be so involved with relative matters that your awareness of God is diminished. Lower states of consciousness cannot serve higher states except as they become cleansed of restricting influences. But higher states of consciousness can serve lower states by redeeming them. In the same way, it is folly to think that by merely working to improve relative conditions, we are influencing transcendental levels of consciousness. We may be only rearranging conscious dream episodes and having no worthwhile effect at all in relationship to transforming human consciousness. It is useful for people in relative consciousness to do their best to maintain order and to assist one another in practical ways. An enlightened person may also do this, but for a higher purpose—to provide a stable social foundation upon which spiritual growth can be based. Devotees on the spiritual path should emulate enlightened souls by working to contribute to the general good of all people, while learning how to be more God conscious and share divine influences with others and the world.

Therefore, do not neglect your spiritual practices by being so involved in relative relationships and activities that you forget God. With God, all things are possible. Of ourselves, only some things are possible. Even while nurturing worthwhile relationships and performing your social duties, besides being God conscious, also do something intentional to assist in the spiritual education of others. Share your positive attitude and your personal example of how life should be lived. When possible, share truth literature with interested persons. If appropriate, lead a weekly meditation gathering. And without fail, financially support the enlightenment movement of your choice.

The resources available to you represent life in action. How you use available resources reveals your understanding and your commitment. Understanding that God is the only reality, the only substance, you know that everything is provided you. You own nothing. Even your relative life is not your own. Therefore, distribute available resources wisely and let yourself be a conduit through which other souls are blessed. It is impossible to be cosmic conscious and lacking in compassion at the same time. It is impossible to be God conscious and withhold the flow of life at the same time. It is impossible to love God and be attached to things at the same time. It is impossible to be open to life and refuse to let life flow at the same time. If you really are a God conscious being, behave like one and give like one.

I often state that there is a benevolent Power nourishing the universe, and us, and we can learn to *cooperate* with it. Notice, I do not say we can "use it." The desire to use divine power is an obstacle to continued spiritual growth. Enlightened people, while at times interceding in personal and world affairs when guided from within to do so, usually do not attempt to influence change except by soul intention and persuasion. This is because they are willing to work with evolutional forces and "do God's will," not assert their personal will.

There is nothing wrong with using our abilities to satisfy legitimate needs. What is detrimental to spiritual growth is selfish or willful use of creative abilities. This not only indicates lack of understanding, it prevents understanding from unfolding. This is why yogic literature advises against fascination with, or misuse of *siddhis* ("the powers of perfection," soul abilities). It is not that they cannot be used, only that they should be used with discernment. This is illustrated by the New Testament account (*The Gospel According to Saint Matthew* 4:1-10) where Jesus is described as being tempted by his lower nature, while in seclusion after his spiritual baptism by John the Baptist. Tempting thoughts included transforming stones into bread, falling from a high place to see if divine intervention would save him from harm, and acquiring political power. All these, he rejected, in favor of allowing God's will to be done through him.

One saint in India, who, occasionally, publicly materializes objects, was reminded by a visitor that misuse of soul powers could lead to preoccupation with mundane concerns. He said, "You are right,

and if I had any ego I shouldn't do these things." Whatever siddhi ability he uses is always spontaneously expressed to bless people and encourage their faith.

Another saint once said, "A person who is conscious of using his siddhi powers, should not do so." Again, he was emphasizing that advanced spiritual abilities should only be demonstrated under inner guidance, or allowed to express as a spontaneous move of the spirit of God.

Beyond preliminary God conscious realizations is realization of the field of pure consciousness which supports the Godhead and all outer manifestation. This is not the same as the unified field of Science, in which fine cosmic forces are mixed but are not yet manifested as discernible matter. The unified field is related to the field of primal matter, from which the universes emerge. The experience of pure consciousness is absolute being, absolute silence, absolute existence. Anchored in this, the soul never again returns to involvement with relative spheres. Even with partial God consciousness a soul may return to identification with relative spheres because of being influenced by cosmic forces, the gunas, even if no personal karma is influential; just as the soul originally became involved with the field of matter.

For steady spiritual growth it is essential that one live from the highest level of awareness possible, in order to actualize the influences of that level and to prepare for the next unfoldment. If we say, "I know better, but I don't try to do better," we need to pay more attention to self-discipline, study, meditation, and surrender in God.

Personal Comprehension Review

Use this review opportunity to improve your understanding of the Lesson material and facilitate your practice.

1. What is the purpose of a formal act of initiation?

2. What is the spiritual significance of initiation?

3. What is the best preparation for initiation?

4. What are the three essential requirements for one who desires initiation into higher life?

5. What can we do to support inner transformation?

6. What are some reasons for decay of the physical body?

7. What is the basis of physical rejuvenation?

8. How can we know our divine nature?

9. How can a degree of knowledge of God be experienced through the mind?

10. Practice the "God conscious" meditation process.

11. Why should we *cooperate* with the benevolent Power that nourishes the universe instead of trying to use it?

But you, when you pray, enter into your private place, and when you have shut the door, pray to God in secret; and God who knows all things shall reward you openly.
The Gospel According to Saint Matthew 6:6
paraphrase from the King James version

Reflections

Every day, without fail, enter your meditation chamber and give yourself to prayer and contemplation. When pausing to pray during a busy interlude in the day, your "private place" will be the sanctuary of the Self, the quiet inward center of your soul nature. Either way, shut the door to outer things and be absorbed in God communion. This is the way to pray with results following.

Thus turned inward, you are alone with God. And since God contains all things within His consciousness, God knows everything. As your consciousness becomes more clear, as you become adjusted to the harmonious flows of subtle currents with origins at deeper levels, any necessary changes in your life will be naturally, spontaneously experienced.

Perhaps you will not pray for outer changes, but only for a clearer, more soul-satisfying *knowing* of your relationship with God and the fact that you are *in* God and all is well.

Your private meditation chamber can be your refuge from the pressures of secular life—a place to go when you want to be still, when you want to be restored to peace, when you want to dive deep into the Infinite. Just being there, even without being engaged in formal prayer or meditation, can be spiritually enlivening. When there, you are reminded of your true purpose in life: that of being God conscious and God-directed. Being there can enable you to come to terms with your thoughts, feelings, relationships, and with the choices you may have to make from time to time. There, you will have occasion to reflect upon your values, upon what is important to you, and what to do to be more surrendered and effective as a disciple of God.

When our pilgrimage group went from America to India in early

1991, one of our stops included a visit to the house in Benares where Lahiri Mahasaya lived. We were taken to the private room where he met with disciples and where he read the scriptures and sat for long hours in samadhi (superconsciousness). I was reminded of how he would often remind his disciples to meditate daily and to actually go into a room and lock the door so they would not be disturbed by family members or casual acquaintances. It was what he did, and he advised his disciples to do likewise.

Lahiri Mahasaya further advised his initiate disciples to "live a secret life." By that, he meant they should attend to family and social duties and keep their spiritual practices a private matter—except in special instances when they could be certain that others were genuinely interested in spiritual matters. Even then, he counseled that they should not overly talk about philosophy or inner processes. Rather, they should deepen their own meditation practice and let their soul radiance flow outward in appropriate ways.

Paramahansaji said that his guru, Sri Yukteswar, would often go for a walk in the neighborhood near his ashram and converse with people he met. Many casual acquaintances did not know of Sri Yukteswar's spiritual attainment, for he was able to discuss community and secular matters easily and seldom introduced spiritual topics unless it was appropriate to do so. Paramahansaji also advised his disciples, and persons who attended his public lectures and classes, to "live the life" rather than talk too much about it. "Let your life be an example," he would say. "You don't have to always be talking about spiritual matters."

Too much talk of any kind stirs emotions and contributes to restlessness. Excessive talk also drains the body of energy and tires the mind and nervous system. When we learn to be more inwardly peaceful, more profound intellectual and intuitive insights can be experienced. By being inwardly centered, a clearer sense of purpose is known and can more easily be actualized.

Our major life purposes are known more easily when we are calm. Many people, being compulsive, frantic, and overly outward, erroneously conclude that they are living with purpose when, in fact, they are not. They are still being driven by their moods and by their mental and emotional restlessness. We may think that we have free will when we make choices. But from whence does desire spring? What is the cause of our desires, our urges, our inclinations to action? Are

they always rooted in soul awareness or are they reactions to restlessness, to some hidden need that drives us without our conscious knowledge of it?

God, being infinite, is self-complete and does not act because of need. When we are grounded in God consciousness we, too, are self-complete and are no longer compelled to act because of need. We will have a sense of larger purpose, but it will be due to our inclination to play a meaningful role in life, and not because we are spiritually incomplete or emotionally unsettled. We do not have to prove anything to ourselves or to anyone else when we are grounded in the Infinite.

We do not always change from egocentric motivation to selfless, soul-influenced behaviors immediately. There can be a conversion experience, of course, as well as smooth adjustments in attitude, understanding, and behavior. Often, however, we experience interludes of uncertainty because of outgrowing immature ways but not knowing quite how to proceed correctly. We may, then, feel that we no longer want a completely sense-driven life but we are unable to clearly see the larger picture of possibilities. This is a transition phase and is nothing about which to be unduly concerned.

I have known many people when they were going through such changes. They were no longer interested in matters which formally attracted them, but they were not yet able to relax and be open to revelation or to the activity of God's grace. They were, they have said, somewhat inwardly happy but not fulfilled because the life they desired to experience had not yet unfolded. More, they did not know what to do about the situation.

About all one can do at such times is to maintain a routine of activity and attention to duty, while giving more time to study, prayer, and meditation. If this is done, the inner light will reveal the way. What should be avoided is excessive emotionalism and frantic efforts to "make things happen."

We Live Now in God

Cultivate Holy Remembrance, Always

Unenlightened mind tends to attempt to "make God in its own image" by attributing a variety of human characteristics and conditions to God. God is not a cosmic person, a super individualized personality. God is the single manifesting aspect of Supreme Consciousness.

God, then, includes everything that is manifested in the allness of universal consciousness. We are in God now. We live in God, whether we are aware of it or not. Because of this, God is not removed from us, nor do we have to plead with God to relate to us. All we need to do is cultivate Holy Remembrance; that is, remind ourselves of the truth of God and the truth of our relationship with God.

When you awaken in the morning, awaken in God. When you attend to your duties, move in God. When you are with friends, see them in the ocean of God. When you meditate, melt in God. When you go to sleep, sleep in God. This is how to consciously be liberated in God. To be liberated is to be free from prior causes. In God, only grace rules.

– Roy Eugene Davis

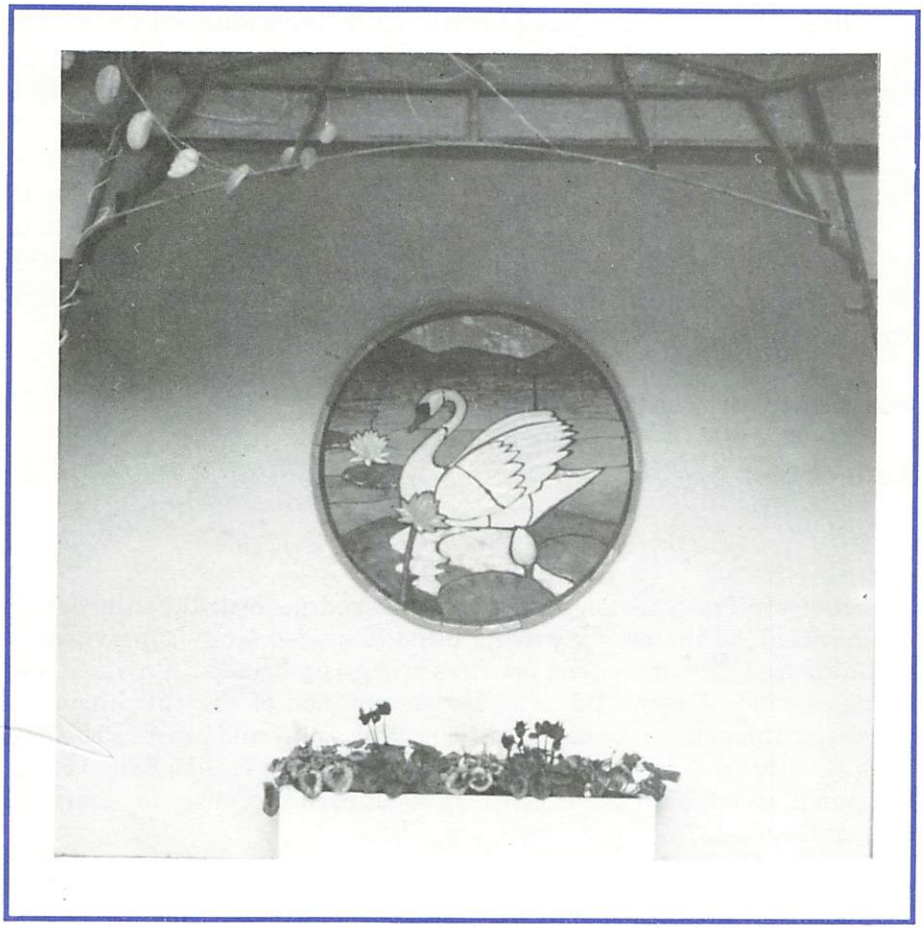
CENTER FOR SPIRITUAL AWARENESS
STUDIES IN TRUTH LESSON GUIDE
MASTER COURSE

NUMBER TWELVE

92

Surrendered Love, Redeeming Grace

AS IT WAS, IS NOW, AND EVER SHALL BE



The fact that man is unable or unwilling to acknowledge God, means only that he cannot accept ideas and beliefs about God framed by men, the false gods which obscure the living and ineffable God.

– SARVEPALLI RADHAKRISHNAN

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To "overcome the world" we need not depart it. We have but to awaken to clear understanding and realize the truth of our own Being and of the Absolute Reality. Being present, as we are present, it is knowable and realizable.

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Studies in Truth Lesson Guides are published and distributed by Center for Spiritual Awareness for private use and guided study supervised by acknowledged CSA ministers, teachers and group leaders. Prepared and written by Roy Eugene Davis as an examination of the enlightenment process, with emphasis on the traditions, philosophy and practice of Kriya Yoga. Center for Spiritual Awareness, Post Office Box 7, Lake Rabun Road, Lakemont, Georgia 30552 (U.S.A.) In West Africa: Center for Spiritual Awareness, Post Office Box 507, Accra, Ghana.

Only love, Charity, in its deep peacefulness and abiding joy, can embrace all human inconsistency and imperfection and see within it the stirring of the Perfect. But so God loves the world. *EVELYN UNDERHILL (1875-1941)*
The Fruits of the Spirit

The Spirit of Love, wherever it is, is its own blessing and happiness, because it is the truth and reality of God in the soul; and therefore is in the same joy of life, and is the same good to itself everywhere and on every occasion.
WILLIAM LAW (1686-1761)
The Way of Divine Knowledge

Pure consciousness is everlasting, complete, without beginning or end. It is one indivisible Being. In it is the origin of all knowledge and love, the root of all power and joy. *THE VEDAS*

Surrendered Love, Redeeming Grace
AS IT WAS, IS NOW, AND EVER SHALL BE

Love is experienced as a warm, affectionate, benevolent feeling of relationship. Love is, love accepts and love shares. Love is directly experienced in relationships and the purest relationship is soul to God. Soul to soul, being to being, person to person love can also be pure. When love is present, open communication prevails. When love is expressed, the object of love blossoms. When love is received, the subject is fulfilled, hence the words, "Love is the fulfilling of the law of life."

Everything else we do to help ourselves to wellness and spiritual growth culminates in love, surrendered love that enables us to be responsive to redeeming and revealing grace. Because we are in relationship with God we cannot liberate ourselves. We can love God but only when we experience God's love can we experience grace. Just as we care about ourselves and about others, so God cares about Himself, and therefore, about us—because God is us. Because God is manifesting as the worlds, the worlds are also loved. Because of God's love the worlds are being transformed and redeemed, purified and recovered, made luminous and their purposes fulfilled.

We may feel that it is relatively easy to love God because our relationship with God is personal, private and a matter of our coming to terms with God as a consistently benevolent Being. It may not always be so easy to love others because of conflicts which personality differences present or because, in our judgment at least, others are not always very lovable. They may not return our affection. We may even feel them unworthy of love. Is it really possible to love a person who has objectionable personality traits, who is not always thoughtful, who does not always act lovingly and who at times seems unworthy of anyone's love? Yes, it is, because no matter how unseemly we behave we always, deep down, love ourselves. We care about ourselves, have the capacity to forgive ourselves and are always able to allow ourselves another chance at improvement. Even when it seems no one else cares, we care. And because God *is* us, God cares.

How *much* we love ourselves, how much we respect ourselves and care about our wellness and spiritual growth, is of course revealed by our behavior toward others. If we are not very aware of our own divinity, it is almost impossible for us to acknowledge the divine nature of others. If we are not good to ourselves, we will not know how to really be good to others. If we are not generous with ourselves, we are unlikely to be generous with others. We may give to others, but our giving will be tainted with conditions, or done only to satisfy some inner psychological need and not out of recognition of our true oneness and interrelatedness.

The fact of life is, we share the universe with trillions of souls and we cannot afford to have enmity between us. While every soul is free to follow his own destined path, there should be harmony in relationships and mutual respect in all circumstances. It will not do to love only our family members, friends and persons who appeal to us—we are to love everyone with divine love. Further, we are to pray for those who do not like us and even would exploit or use us. We are to love as God loves, perfectly and generously. When we do not do this, we not only withhold affection from those who need it, we injure ourselves psychologically and interfere with our own spiritual growth.

While we can imitate caring behavior by conscious intention, love cannot blossom until the soul nature unfolds. When we begin to care about the spiritual and general welfare of others as much as we care about these for ourselves, love is unfolding. We can contribute to

love's unfoldment by extending ourselves in helpful ways and by praying and meditating with devotional ardor. When prana moves more freely through the heart chakra and expansion of consciousness occurs, we experience in varying degrees of realization that we are more than a personality, that we are spiritual beings. With this, a more cosmic sense unfolds and we become aware that others are also spiritual beings and our former self-love becomes other-directed so that we begin to really care about other people, all things in Nature and the universe itself. It is impossible not to care about that which is a part of us.

Soul love is forever love. When Paramahansaji accepted me as a disciple he said, "I pledge to you my unconditional love. No matter what you do, or do not do, I will love you forever. Can you pledge that same love to me?" I did. Soul love is permanent, just as God's love is permanent. No matter what we do, God's love is the same. We may not always be open and responsive to God's love, but it is there when we turn to it, when we surrender in it.

We sometimes hear it said that someone's love turned to hate which, of course, is impossible to happen. One can withhold love and instead express dislike, but love can never be transformed into anything other than what it is.

Our Surrendered Love and Spiritual Growth

Love's transforming influence and God's redemptive grace can markedly contribute to psychological and spiritual growth. We see partial evidence of this when someone we know "falls in love." They change, have more vitality, a more caring attitude and enhanced appreciation for life. That kind of love does not always blossom into the fullness of divine love, but it somewhat reveals the fact that love does dissolve ego boundaries and opens one's awareness to a larger dimension. Likewise, it is with us when we experience surrendered love in relationship with God. Our personality changes, our health improves, we are more purposeful and truly alive. It is easier to do the things we should do and to avoid the things which are not useful to our higher purposes. Metaphysical study, prayer and meditation—all of the life-enhancing things which can contribute to our wellness and growth—are joyful. Life's experiences are one blessing after another and problems become minimal.

When we meditate in surrendered love of God, meditation becomes a spontaneous, progressive experience in unfolding states of consciousness. Even during occasions of inner challenge, we can patiently wait and watch, knowing that redeeming grace will see us through. There comes a stage in our awakening when we realize that we can do nothing more to help ourselves except surrender. To give up too soon may result in passivity and a slowing of the growth process. To heroically struggle beyond the point at which we are powerless to help ourselves may only prolong our unfulfilled condition. You will know when it is time to actively contemplate and use will, and when it is time to let go and let God do for you what you cannot do for yourself. Everything you have ever done to help yourself will have prepared you for the moment. You will have done your part. Grace will do the rest.

At a certain stage in our spiritual growth, evolutional forces which helped us to that level are superceded by the attracting power of God. Until then, we were assisted by our own efforts and the currents of evolution. When grace becomes increasingly influential, rapid spiritual growth is assured and all higher stages of realization are actualized. As when practicing advanced Kriya Yoga meditation techniques, we at first seize the pranic currents by an act of intention and induce them to flow upward. Once they begin to flow with dynamic insistence, the process continues spontaneously according to our inner receptivity. The more prepared we are, the more responsive we are, the more transformative are the results.

The episodes of genuine insight, of revelation, which occur during contemplative meditation, are due to God's grace. They occur when we are surrendered and inwardly still, when the impulse of the soul in the direction of transcendence is allowed to be influential. This is why sitting in the silence after prayer and preliminary meditation techniques have been used is recommended. It is during thoughtless, surrendered, devotional waiting that dramatic shifts of consciousness can be experienced. Just sit for a long time, with relaxed, surrendered resolve. If you sit long enough, patiently enough, the subjective side of life will be revealed to you.

It is obvious, when we exercise our powers of reason, that good intentions, personal efforts, and even all of our selfless service are not sufficient to ensure a conscious relationship with God and an understanding of life's processes. Every useful thing we do is helpful in

preparing us for spiritual growth and much of what we do can even allow some spiritual growth, but major spiritual growth is the result of continual desiring to know God and surrender to growth processes. If good intentions, personal efforts and selfless service were completely results-producing, millions would today be God-realized. Good intentions can help to keep us on a righteous path. Personal efforts can help us resolve inner conflicts and somewhat regulate mental and physical circumstances so that superconscious states can be experienced. Selfless service removes ego boundaries and enlarges our capacity to experience a more universal view of life. But everything we do should be done with surrendered love, with a willing attitude, as an offering to the Divine. We then begin to discover that the relationship with God that we had longed for, that we knew we could have, becomes increasingly evident. In the early stages we may perhaps be more calm, more confident, more soul-centered, more certain of our awareness of the reality of God even before understanding unfolds. Then, as we continue our quiet, surrendered way, inner certainty increases and we begin to see more obvious signs that we are on the right path. We begin to notice that our discernment is better, our timing improves, and it is easier to be appropriate in routine and unusual circumstances. We notice that life more and more provides us with opportunities to learn, to grow, and to serve. We find that meditation is easier and more fruitful and that after meditation, while engaged in routine activities and relationships, the inner awareness of the presence of God remains constant. No matter what we are doing we are always aware that we are in God and God is in us. Anxiety about the future fades and certainty replaces doubt. We find that we are more patient in the face of circumstances which cannot immediately be changed and we can be more infallibly decisive in initiating actions to change circumstances which can and should be changed. We increasingly realize that the soul fulfillment and conscious participation with life's processes we had been looking forward to, is being experienced. We are no longer striving to attain; instead, we live in the flow of good fortune. Attachments drop away, legitimate needs are easily met, whatever is required to allow us to fulfill our worthy purposes is supplied, fear of death and after death states vanishes. We actually experience that the kingdom of heaven (fulfillment) does actually extend to the world in which we presently live. We could not see it

before. We could not believe it before. We could not experience it before. But now, we can, and we wonder how we could have possibly not seen how easy it is to know it. It was there all the time awaiting our recognition, but we could not acknowledge it because of not knowing how to look or because of being otherwise preoccupied with surface matters, with personal concerns, with the routine affairs common to conditioned states of consciousness.

With soul perceptions no longer obstructed, with mental faculties no longer veiled, we begin to understand why the saints have long said, "The fulfillment you seek is available to you now, just learn to see it and accept it," and, "These things I do, you can do also." Again, "You do not have to be confused, sick, lonely, or impoverished. Everything you need is available—just reach out and take it; let your soul qualities unfold." Yes, it is true. At the deepest level of our being we are now knowledgeable, whole, well, and at peace. These attributes have only to be actualized. We often struggle so sincerely to overcome, to awaken, to unfold our soul capacities. We often do everything but that which is most useful—cultivate devotion to God and live in surrendered love.

A disciple once asked his guru, "Sir, is it really necessary for me to meditate, chant, study the scriptures, and engage in harsh disciplines to realize God?" The master said, "No, it is not. If you will let your ego dissolve and surrender completely to God, everything will unfold effortlessly."

Live righteously with surrendered love. Be self-disciplined with surrendered love. Study with surrendered love. Meditate with surrendered love. Serve with surrendered love. That is the final word on the matter, the truth, the obvious yet sometimes difficult to grasp teaching, the certain way to soul happiness and liberation of consciousness.

Now that You Know the Way,
What Will You Do?

In these concise Lessons I have shared with you the philosophical understanding of the spiritual masters of the Ages, the basic lifestyle guidelines which can enable you to live in harmony with the forces and rhythms of the universe, the meditation routines and techniques to experience higher realities and prepare for conscious eternal life, and the metaphysical principles which determine the processes of

mind and consciousness. With these Lessons and the supplemental studies, you have all you need to experience the fulfillment of life's purposes and to continue your spiritual growth. What is needed now is continued study and application of what you know. What is needed now is to live as you know how to live, then leave the results to God's grace. All you have to do is to say "Yes" to life. To repeat a common axiom, "If you now do what you know you should do, you cannot possibly fail to experience desired results."

Even when you live a well-ordered life and are regular in meditation practice, there may be a few other matters of which to be aware and with which to work in order to clear your consciousness. Constantly, until you are established in perfect understanding, you will have to exercise discernment and be self-reminded that outer conditions are but reflections of inner mental states and states of consciousness; that they have no power over you except as you allow yourself to be influenced by them. Also, it is important to be willing to allow personality changes to occur, to allow yourself to become emotionally mature and responsible and not to persist in conditioned ways of behavior which are no longer useful or appropriate. Finally, engage in frequent self-observation to be sure you are self-honest and living up to the highest principles of which you are capable.

Whenever you find yourself becoming overly influenced by external conditions, to the appearances of the world, withdraw for a duration and exercise discernment until your perception of yourself in relationship with your world is as it should be. Whenever you notice that you are dramatizing immature behavior, correct it. Whenever you become aware of illusory thinking and any behavior except that which is optimumly possible, clarify your thinking and improve your performance.

Live joyfully in the world but do not be overly influenced by it. All possibilities are present in the world. They have only to be chosen. What you choose for yourself are what your experiences will be.

I am praying with you that you will always choose happiness, health, purposeful living, steady psychological and spiritual growth, surrendered love and redeeming grace.

God in heaven, let me really feel my nothingness, not in order to despair over it, but in order to feel the more powerfully the greatness of Thy goodness.

SOREN KIERKEGAARD (1813-1855)
Journals

Above the generations the lonely
prophets rise,
While truth flings dawn and day-star
within their glowing eyes;
And other eyes beholding, are kindled
from the light;
And dawn becomes the morning, the
darkness put to flight.

WILLIAM CHANNING GANNETT
(1840-1923)

Lifestyle Guidelines

HEALTHY, LONG LIFE WITH PURPOSE (Part Two)

Psychological and physical wellness is restored by doing those things which should routinely be done to maintain it. When there is disequilibrium of internal forces and processes, something has occurred to disturb Nature's natural inclination to be balanced. It is then that we become aware of the need to restore balance. By living a simple, natural life we learn how to live so as to maintain internal balance and wellness. Should we experience a disturbance of the balanced condition, we have only to implement attitudes and practices which would have maintained balanced, and harmony will again be restored.

Radical rejuvenation regimens are only needed when, for some reason, we have neglected to observe the laws of Nature—allowed stress to accumulate, allowed the body to become toxic, allowed psychological pressures to mount, neglected routine health measures, been neglectful of spiritual practices—or when genetic or karmic influences become pronounced and must be confronted and reduced.

For maintenance purposes all that is required is to live in harmony with the rhythms of Nature and remain God-centered and

purposeful. Maintenance routines are those which are explained throughout the body of these Lessons, and all activities should be regulated so that just the right relationship between activity and rest is maintained.

Because of an accumulation of stress and other hardships on the body being allowed to persist, vital forces which should ordinarily be used to regenerate the body are mostly utilized in coping with the various physical challenges and repairing the body. This is one reason for rapid aging of the body. However, when we maintain a balanced living program, vital forces not needed for correcting damage to the body can be used for creative purposes, can be transmuted into finer energies to restructure the brain and nervous system, and be accumulated as radiant energy which maintains and strengthens the body's immune system.

In all instances, everything we do to contribute to wellness and spiritual growth is for the purpose of eliminating restricting conditions so that soul force can enliven the body and universal forces can be more influential in body, mind and personal affairs. And in all instances we are not causing wellness or even desired relationships, we are but doing our part to *allow* life to express as it is innately inclined to express. This is why to the degree that we can experience our "nothingness" we can "more powerfully experience the greatness of God's goodness."

Remember, always, *if you have clear purpose in life, you will do what you need to do to experience its fulfillment.* You will attend to the necessary things without being obsessed by them, while giving the major portion of your attention to more universal matters.

Remember, too, the aims of life in this world—to know your purposes and fulfill them, to satisfy your legitimate desires and needs, to intelligently relate to the universe, and to experience steady spiritual growth culminating in illumination of consciousness. With these aims in mind, you will be naturally inclined to be disciplined with purpose and to attend to necessary matters relative to fulfilling these aims.

The Buddha, speaking of illumination, said that it...

> ...will cause a person to become beloved, popular, respected among his fellows, victorious over discontent and lust; will bestow upon him the ecstasy of contemplation; will enable him

> to attain with his body, and remain in, those stages of deliverance which are incorporeal and pass beyond phenomena; will cause him to become an inheritor of the highest heavens; make him becoming one to become multiple, being multiple to become one; will endow him with clear and heavenly ear, surpassing that of men; enable him to comprehend by his own heart the hearts of other beings and of other men, to understand all minds, the passionate, the calm, the angry, the peaceable, the deluded, the wise, the concentrated, the sublime, the mean, the steadfast, the wavering, the free and the enslaved; give him power to call to mind his various temporary states in days gone by; such as one birth, two births, three, four, five, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, a hundred, a thousand or a hundred thousand births: his births in many an eon of both destruction and renovation; to call to mind his temporary states in days gone by in all their modes and in all their details; to see with pure and heavenly vision surpassing that of men, beings as they pass from one state of existence and take form in others; beings base or noble, good-looking and ill-favored, happy or miserable: to know and realize emancipation of heart and emancipation of mind.

The reason why healthy, long life has value, then, is that it enables us to fulfill our purposes. Some people virtually ignore wellness regimens because they lack purpose in life; also, because of a not-so-disguised will to death. If you should ever face a challenge of any kind, along with implementing actions to overcome the challenge, ask yourself, "What will I do when this challenge is successfully met?" Then make plans to fulfill your purposes even while removing the obstacles. Don't make mere problem-solving the purpose of your life. Be bigger than that—be more expansive, more of a realistic visionary.

All of your worthy dreams can come true. Even dreams unworthy of you can come true if you dwell on them. This is because we experience what we think about, what we consider possible. We can, therefore, attract to ourselves good fortune or misfortune, depending upon how we think, how we imagine, how we believe. Our behaviors tend to follow our inner vision of possibilities. The same laws of causation which can liberate us from self-inflicted bondage or the influences of circumstances, can also contribute to further limitation. The laws of causation are impersonal: whatever avenue is provided

for them, they can and will express through. This is why it is said that man creates his own hell and allows his own heaven. It comes down to personal choice.

The Stages of Life: How to Plan and Live Them

If you are young, define your major purposes now and educate yourself as preparation to fulfill them. If you are at mid-term in your life, assess your options and if changes are in order, make them in line with your new vision of possibilities. If you are older and at the stage of retiring from many family and social obligations, use your time to further your understanding, share your knowledge and available resources with others, and deepen your metaphysical studies and spiritual practices. If you are nearing the end of your sojourn on Planet Earth, dissolve every remaining attachment, put your personal affairs in order, and give yourself to contemplation of God.

At all times, remember that you are a citizen of eternity; that you live in the field of endless time until you experience transcendence. Live your life so that everything you do is fully supportive of your highest aspirations and worthy purposes. In this way, no matter what your involvement with life is, you will be living righteously, appropriately, and consciously on the spiritual path. Do not continue to live a self-centered life, hoping for future understanding and future freedom in God. Be free in God now, by allowing your awareness to expand until it is infinite. After all, as this occurs you are but being restored to your original condition, your natural state.

Contemplate the matter by asking yourself, "How was it with me before I forgot my real nature?" And, "How was it with me before time?" You may experience that spiritual growth is not always so much a matter of gradual unfolding, but of awakening, of experiencing a shift from one point of view to another. You may discover that you have a natural ability to see and experience life from any point of view you choose.

Our acceptance of states of consciousness as fixed confines us to those states assumed to be real. A sick person may be unable to imagine wellness. An addicted person may be unable to imagine freedom from addiction. A lonely person may be unable to imagine being satisfied. A poor person may be unable to imagine being wealthy. A begger may be unable to imagine being self-reliant. A

spiritually unaware person may be unable to imagine being a saint. A spiritual aspirant may be unable to imagine being cosmic conscious or God conscious. Yet, all these conditions are merely matters of states of consciousness, of what we are able to see and accept as real from where we see ourselves in relationship to the universe.

What can you *see* for yourself? So long as you are in relative states of consciousness, what you can imagine, believe, and feel, you will tend to experience. When functioning from soul awareness, whatever you *know* to be true and whatever you *expect* or *intend* to happen, will happen. While in relative states of consciousness, your faith will sustain you. Outcomes are predictable according to your pure faith. When functioning from soul awareness, you are above relative laws of causation and even above commonly known metaphysical laws of causation. You then move spontaneously in perfect knowledge and God's grace.

The laws governing the universe are operational right where you are. As a spiritual being you have the capacity to unfold your innate intelligence and live in harmony with universal laws. Therefore, liberation of consciousness and freedom of expression are available to you now. The best opportunity you have to awaken, learn, grow spiritually and serve the cause of evolution is now. To await a future time to live as you are meant to live is folly. To await a future incarnation when "maybe circumstances will be different" is illusion. To speculate about future possibilities in astral and causal realms is irresponsible. By awakening now, by learning now, by seeing to your liberation of consciousness now, is the pressing matter and should be the focus of your attention.

Paramahansaji always told me, "You can know God fully in this incarnation." That is the attitude to have. It requires surrender and it requires will. Surrender to natural and divine laws and intention to fulfill worthy purposes. The worthiest purpose of all is to be God-realized. Having experienced God you need never again depart from that realization.

Attending to necessary matters in the relative world is invaluable self-training for being responsible when exploring higher realities. This is why individuals who are successful human beings make such rapid progress on the spiritual path when they become inclined in the direction of spiritual growth. Already skilled in success procedures, being used to fulfilling purposes, they approach the matter of spiri-

tual growth with the same confident attitude. The spiritual path is not for insecure, fearful, indecisive people. It is for self-confident, courageous, intentional people.

People who are superficially, half-heartedly involved with metaphysical studies and spiritual practices are not wasting their time and effort completely, because they may be accumulating some information and acquiring some constructive mental impressions and behaviors. But unless a radical shift in consciousness occurs, theirs is the long, arduous path to awakening. The better way is to focus on that approach which seems best, then be loyal to it, testing and applying what is learned in order to become proficient and knowledgeable.

How many years do you have before you in this incarnation? What will you do with the time available? How will you live? What will be your contribution to others? What will be your contribution to the evolutionary process? Think about it. Then use the Intentional Life Plan form provided here to write your plans. Use your notebook to fully enter into this program, if you wish.

My Intentional Life Plan

Age _____

Number of expected years remaining in this incarnation _____

My intentional plan for continued self-improvement:

My intentional plan to be of real service to others and to contribute to the unfolding process of evolution:

Liberation is stabilization of the soul in its real Self (its natural state). On attaining this liberation, one is saved from all his troubles, and all the desires of his heart are fulfilled, so the ultimate aim of his life is fulfilled.

SWAMI SRI YUKTESWAR

The more a man loves, the deeper he penetrates the divine purposes. Love is the astrolabe of heavenly mysteries, the eye-salve which clears the spiritual eye and makes it clairvoyant.* *JALAL-UD-DIN-RUMI (1207-1273)*

The Masnawi

Transcendence

THE THIRD STAGE OF HIGHER REALIZATION

In the two preceding Lessons we have examined cosmic consciousness and God consciousness, the states preliminary to the third and final stage, liberation of consciousness. One need not be removed from this world to be liberated, one need only cease being dependent upon body, mind and cosmic forces as supports for consciousness. One can then relate to body, mind and cosmic forces but not be influenced by them. This is what it means to be liberated, removed from unwanted identification with anything that might interfere with pure awareness.

A person used to the support of material things might erroneously assume that liberation means nonawareness, disinterest in life processes and inability to enjoy relationships and activities. To the contrary, as Paramahansaji once said, "When you are anchored in God-realization you can have fun without being attached to fun." To a God-surrendered devotee, beauty, appreciation of life in all aspects, learning—all are enjoyable—but are recognized as transient events which cannot be the basis of permanent soul happiness. While what we consider to be good, in the relative sense, is usually preferred over its opposite, it can also be the cause of attachment if we are dependent upon it.

One can experience considerable spiritual progress by diligent

* *astrolabe*, an astronomical instrument used for taking the altitude of the sun or stars and in navigation.

use of discrimination. In the early stages of practice, the faculty of intelligence is used for this. Later, even the faculty of intelligence is seen by the soul to be unnecessary to higher realization because intuition and will are sufficient. Intuition allows direct perception. The exercise of pure will, not to be confused with willfulness, enables the soul to incline its attention to God and the experience of pure consciousness.

The right use of discrimination for higher purposes is described in the *Yoga Sutras* (4:25-28):

> When, through discrimination, one experiences complete independence from body, senses and mind, that person is free. Having become independent of body, senses and mind, consciousness becomes serene and calm, and attention flows in the direction of absolute freedom. Even when inclined in the direction of absolute freedom, interruptions of contemplative meditation may result during intervals when the mind experiences an invasion of thoughts because of old habits, tendencies, and impressions which retain some influential force. One must renounce these thoughts, fantasies, and illusions, as they are obstacles to the experience of final enlightenment.

Sensory impressions, as well as thoughts generated independently of sensory impressions, are presented to the intellect for evaluation and determination. This is the reasoning process which enables one to arrive at correct conclusions. But it is the soul which ultimately decides. Likewise, by first using intellect and then intuition, the soul is able to know itself as being independent of body, senses, thoughts, and mind. With this, the sense of existing as a unit of pure consciousness may be experienced. However, soul attention continuing to flow in the direction of absolute freedom, eventually results in a shift of viewpoint, allowing the soul to experience God consciousness with no sense of being other than God consciousness. Even this experience is to be transcended.

While still at the level of contemplative meditation, even while knowing itself to be other than the mind, mental identification may remain. This allows contemplation to be disturbed by mental operations due to the influences of habits, instinctual tendencies and drives, and karmic impressions which have not yet been dissolved. Even at this preliminary level of partial transcendence, because of

these influences, concentration can be disturbed by thoughts, mental fantasies and illusory perceptions. There are three ways to remove attention from these distracting influences. 1) They can be renounced by withdrawing attention from them. 2) They can be ignored by surrendering more completely to God. 3) They can be transcended by determined will (inclination) to experience higher states of consciousness. Passive involvement with them will result in continued identification and confusion.

It is at this level that many saints remain, sometimes for eons of time, if they are not completely committed to higher realization. It is also at this level that the devotee can restrict further soul awakening by choosing to enjoy higher superconscious states because of being attracted by fine perceptions, blissful absorption, and other experiences. In the early stages of spiritual practice a pure, strong mind is helpful to success. If the mind is strong one will be courageous and willing to experience and learn. Many people are strong-minded but they are confused, so they make mistakes. Many pure minded people are passive and lacking in vision or courage. But with both purity of mind and purposeful resolve, one can progress far on the spiritual path.

In more advanced states, when mental processes are transcended, clear purpose and strong soul resolve are extremely helpful to the realization of higher states of consciousness. Two obstacles to higher spiritual growth are temptation and fear. At a lower level one may be tempted to remain involved with mental phenomena or the enjoyment of superconscious states. At a higher level, if such temptations are not attractive to the soul, there may be fear of the unknown. Again, discrimination can be helpful in the removal of fear. Honest evaluation of one's spiritual growth process will reveal that with each successive unfoldment, increased freedom and knowledge were the results. Likewise, with advanced unfoldments, even greater freedom and knowledge will result.

It is not always easy for the soul, having been identified with externals and with the inner supports of thoughts and feelings, to renounce these supports of awareness. All preliminary useful practices which were helpful up to this stage of spiritual growth, while having been helpful as preparation, are now renounced; they belong to the outer, that which is relative, and not to the inner, that which is transcendent. It is at these higher levels that one goes beyond yogic

practice to yogic experience, beyond procedures to the results of procedures. All useful preliminary procedures, while not causing final results, are for the purpose of allowing them to unfold.

As a result of having chosen a lifestyle supportive of spiritual growth, by the time the devotee arrives at the place in unfoldment where higher stages of realization are being investigated, his personal and environmental circumstances should be such that they represent but minimal opportunities for distraction. For this reason, lifestyle guidelines have been provided in this Lesson series. A well-ordered life allows one freedom to pursue higher interests, to cultivate soul qualities and to explore the meaning and purpose of life. It is more difficult to attend to spiritual growth practices if outer circumstances are challenging, and it is impossible to experience satisfactory spiritual growth if one's attention and energies are totally involved in relative relationships and activities.

The final realization is described in the *Yoga Sutras* (4:29-36):

> Having given up even the craving for liberation, one experiences higher knowledge. With the dawning of true knowledge all restrictions cease. With the dissolution of mental restrictions, individual mind is transformed into cosmic mind. When, with the dawning of knowledge, the cosmic forces having served their purposes, they cease to be influential. No longer perceiving changes from moment to moment, the soul experiences timelessness and true knowledge which is beyond time and change. When cosmic forces, having no further purposes to serve, return to the field of cosmic forces, the soul experiences absolute freedom. This is absolute liberation of consciousness. Liberation of consciousness is that state in which only pure awareness remains.

Desire for liberation persists during higher stages of realization until the soul is at the very edge of full enlightenment. Then, even this is surrendered so that grace can be influential. With the dawning of enlightenment the soul's awareness is removed from the influences of restricting characteristics which may have formerly prevailed. The mind, being purified, is seen for what it is—a portion of cosmic mind. Even the cosmic forces (gunas) are transcended when pure consciousness is experienced. Being no longer influential they are dispersed from the soul coverings and return to the field of universal

cosmic forces. The liberated state, being beyond all relative states, cannot be fully described in words because it cannot be conceptualized. It can be referred to, revealed, demonstrated by example, and directly experienced.

The results of liberation are described, *Yoga Sutras* (4:37, 38):

> When liberated while embodied one sees the universe existing in God and sees God in, and as, the universe. Absolute existence, consciousness, and bliss are the eternal manifesting attributes of God; the transcendent principle (pure consciousness) is beyond these attributes.

Direct knowledge as a result of enlightenment enables a liberated person to experience the universe as a manifesting of God's cosmic forces. What was formerly intellectually acknowledged is now clearly realized. Therefore, with enlightenment all cravings for experience cease. Life is lived spontaneously and joyously and there is nothing about the operations of the life processes to further learn. A liberated person will, of course, observe ever-new changes in the relative spheres because of continual transformations of cosmic forces and changing events.

Liberation is salvation: the state of being "saved" from future pain due to lack of knowledge. In the early stages, karmic impressions may still be influential. These are of the mind and body, not of the soul. In time, they will be released, their motive forces exhausted as a result of their effects being externalized, or dissolved by the power of superior realization. Being liberated while embodied, the soul, always living spontaneously and righteously, does not experience a further accumulation of mental impressions. When karmic impressions due to past actions are eliminated, one lives only by flawless reason and grace.

The exercise of reason enables the liberated soul to make right choices. The impelling influence of grace directs thought processes and behavior, as well as unfolds supportive circumstances. Whenever a fully liberated soul has a need to be met, flawless reason will determine actions (or nonaction) and grace will determine outcomes.

Besides stored karmic impressions which may be influential until removed, the liberated soul may also have to learn to overcome genetic characteristics. These, too, can be handled. He will not be

attached to the effects of any causes nor will his inner peace be disturbed by circumstances. The peace known to liberated souls is peace without outer support, peace which is the result of all supporting and modifying influences having been transcended.

Removed from karmic influences, certain duties will yet have to be performed by a liberated person. One has a duty to maintain the body in a healthy condition and to maintain a supportive personal environment. There is also the obligation to nurture the social order and the planet itself. There may also be a duty to teach, though this is not always so. The liberated person will know what is required of him and will always do what is appropriate, which will in every instance be God's will.

Soul liberation does not mean rejection of the world; it means that one is no longer influenced by it. The "overcoming" of the world is an internal process and results in seeing the world differently than most people see it. Before realization is permanent, even a liberated person should maintain a program of regular meditation in order to become stable in that realization. It is for this reason that we have the examples of God conscious souls throughout recorded history removing themselves to quiet places for the purpose of God communion. They may also, if it is their role, be active during these occasions on inner planes to assist evolutional forces and to work with disciples and people known to them who have need of spiritual support. Any quiet place to which one can withdraw can be suitable for this purpose.

Meditative Contemplation of the Formless Absolute

There are at least two ways to proceed. One way is the way of direct experience through surrendered meditation, using techniques to arrive at the point where meditation becomes spontaneous or experiencing spontaneous meditation from the beginning. When at the level where the sound current is heard and attention is flowing into the spiritual eye, *consciously* surrender to the flow and follow it to its source in the field of God, then go beyond all concepts of God and all attributes of God to awareness of pure being. For this you must be resolved to continue to the ultimate conclusion, and not stop before then or settle into the enjoyment of intermediate states, no matter how attractive they might be. When reaching a level beyond which

you seem unable to go, remain there with an alert, watchful attitude, being open to discovery and responsive to grace. Having done all you can, wait and watch.

Another way is the way of meditative discernment of a more active kind. In a contemplative mood, examine your source of awareness, your source of "I-ness." By discrimination remove yourself from body identification, then from identification with the senses, mental processes and feelings. Remove your awareness from identification with the field of Nature, from gross material manifestation, astral manifestation, causal manifestation, cosmic mind and the primal field of Nature. Contemplate only the reality of God and yourself as a ray of God's conscious light. Then remove your awareness from concepts of God and from the fine cosmic forces resident in the field of God. Contemplate the existence aspect of God, then the field of absolute existence. In the early stages you will be aware that your perceptions are mental: idealized concepts of what you feel it would be like to experience awareness independent of all supports. As intuition replaces intellectual effort you will experience flashes of insight and occasions of genuine direct perception and realization.

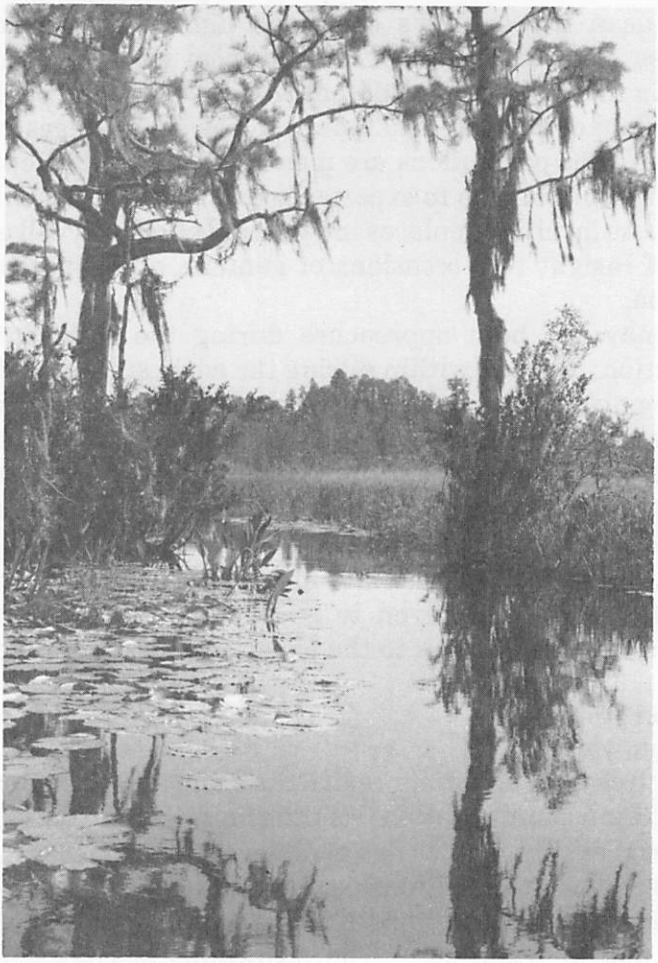
You may use both approaches during the same interlude of introspection: flowing within during the early stages of meditation, then being discerning in the latter stages. Your own soul knowledge will guide you through these subtle stages of unfoldment. It may also be that at certain levels you will be aware of a benevolent presence assisting your progress. Especially is this true if you are an initiate of an enlightenment tradition. If such assistance seems helpful, accept it, but do not endeavor to mentally create any perceptions. Remember, you are resolved to go beyond all modifications and attributes of consciousness to the experience of absolute being.

With Liberation Comes Knowledge

Being free from all former restrictions and able to comprehend all levels of cosmic manifestation from the field of pure consciousness to the material sphere, knowledge of all levels and spheres is unveiled. Knowledge of evolution, life processes, and the processes of cosmic manifestation and dissolution results in complete emancipation from delusion due to ignorance. The operations of consciousness are

known to itself since consciousness is self-referring and self-manifesting. Each soul, being a specialized unit of consciousness, contains within itself total knowledge of the allness of consciousness.

Liberated souls, while embodied in physical, astral or causal spheres, continue to cleanse mind and body of acquired conditionings while performing their God-inspired duties. They then either effect their final release from identification with cosmic manifestation or they relate to it for the purpose of assisting evolutionary trends. Their destiny is known only to them and to other souls which share their degree of realization.



Personal Comprehension Review

Use this review opportunity to improve your understanding of the Lesson material and facilitate your practice.

1. How is love experienced?

2. How does love and grace change us?

3. What can we do to maintain psychological and physical wellness?

4. How can our dreams (our aspirations) come true?

5. Be sure to complete the "life plan" form on page 16.

6. What does it mean to experience transcendence?

7. What are two possible obstacles to spiritual growth? What can be done to overcome them?

8. What are two possible ways to proceed during contemplative meditation in order to acquire higher understanding?

9. Are you totally committed to spiritual growth? If so, how does your behavior reflect your commitment?

Reflections

This issue concludes the *Studies in Truth Master Course* series. In these lessons I have shared with you everything you need to know to proceed on your spiritual growth path and become accomplished in the highest realization of God.

Unless you are fully enlightened and have no further need for study and application of truth principles, it would be a mistake to put these lessons aside and forget them. You may want to broaden your study, of course, but always come back to the basics as provided in these pages—with special emphasis on those matters which require more careful examination and practical application.

Now that you have completed the series, review it, paying particular attention to themes and essential matters which you feel relate to your needs and which you feel can be beneficial to more clearly understand. Be sure to actualize—make real by experience—all of the practical procedures, especially meditation practices. It is in the silence of meditation that revelations are experienced. It is in daily living that our revelations prove to be valid. True revelation is life-transforming in varying degrees, depending upon its intensity and upon our responsiveness to it. Examine what seems to be revelation in the light of reason and intuition to be sure it is real and not an illusory perception.

If you are a devotee of the Kriya Yoga path, be one hundred percent loyal to it; that is, steady in your devotion and practice and patiently focused on living the ideals and principles. If you are a devotee of another enlightenment tradition, be one hundred percent loyal to it in the same way. Honor all worthy traditions while being true to your own. In this way, continue to grow in grace and expand awareness to omnipresence, avoiding any tendency or temptation to become small-minded or smugly self-righteous, feeling that you "know the truth" while others do not. A petty sense of exclusiveness is not becoming of a devotee whose aspiration is to be cosmic

conscious, generous and compassionate.

Cultivate balance in your life. Be inwardly centered and continue with your studies and spiritual practices while also relating appropriately to the world. This kind of balance is often absent in devotees who are otherwise sincere in their endeavors to grow spiritually. Aloneness with God is not threatening because we know such a relationship to be entirely trustworthy and supportive. We are not always so certain, however, about external relationships and circumstances. We are not always so settled in our understanding of what our purpose in life really is or how to proceed to experience its fulfillment. Because of this a devotee may be peaceful in relationship to God yet allow emotional conflicts to cloud personal relationships.

Fear and insecurity are the basis of interpersonal problems. We may be afraid that we will not get what we want from a relationship. We may be afraid that we will be misunderstood. We may allow memories of past failures or hurts to cloud our reason and cause us to behave unseemly. We may want the blessings of grace in our lives but not want to share God's goodness with others: Perhaps they are undeserving. Perhaps they should find their own way, as we may have had to find ours (or so we may think). Perhaps we should attain perfection before even thinking of opening up to others and their spiritual needs.

When Paramahansa Yogananda was a young student in his guru's ashram, he went through a phase of introverted spiritual practice. Sri Yukteswar asked him, "Why are you averse to organizational work?" Paramahansaji replied, "Because no matter what a spiritual teacher does, he is almost always misunderstood and blamed." Sri Yukteswar asked, "Do you want all of the divine food for yourself? Where would you be if generous saints had not been willing to share knowledge of God with you?" Paramahansaji then understood that he had a spiritual duty to include others in his love for God.

Habits of thought and behavior often restrict spiritual growth as well as prevent us from creative expression and personal fulfillment. Such habits may be grounded in memory, in the mental patterns of the mind which are the result of past experience and acquired conditioning. In yoga literature memories are referred to as *samskaras*, impressions stored in the subconscious which are not always consciously known but which determine our attitudes and reactions just the same. We often think ourselves to be able to exercise free will,

determined choice, when in fact our choices may be influenced by our conditioned states of mind.

Emotional immaturity results from ego-fixation and identification with mental conditionings. When ego is resistant to change, even when we declare that change for the better is needed or desired, we may find it difficult to allow necessary change. We may be willful, defensive, and even affirm that we are all right the way we are. Or we may want change on our own terms, in ways which preserve our accustomed personality modes and behaviors. We may think (or even say), "I want knowledge of God. I want to be spiritually aware, but I also want to be me as I am." Such a proposition is of course impossible to be actualized. We cannot awaken to what we are meant to be so long as we cling to that which is incompatible with the higher state. Just as we cannot eat food and have it remain as it was, we cannot grow spiritually while remaining as we are.

In all actions, remember the influences of the *gunas*, the attributes of cosmic forces in nature. *Sattwa*, purity and luminosity, contributes to orderliness, wellness, mental clarity and illumination of consciousness. *Rajas*, transformational influence, contributes to change and fulfillment of purposes. *Tamas*, heaviness or inertia, contributes to mental dullness and unconscious behavior. Therefore, let your thoughts, feelings, relationships and actions be pure and entirely constructive. Avoid restless, purposeless behavior, as well as behaviors and relationships which pull you down and darken your consciousness. Eventually you will rise above the influences of these cosmic attributes and function from clear spiritual awareness; from awareness of pure being as a ray of Supreme Consciousness.

Carefully examine your mental states, your feelings, your behaviors, your relationships (the people you choose to be with and the environments you choose to frequent), and your actions. This may seem an inconsequential matter if you are inwardly devoted to God but I assure you it is not. That which we affirm we love, we make ourselves worthy of relating to, and receptive to the love that is given. Should we not, then, prepare ourselves to experience higher realities? Should we not do all we can to allow spiritual growth to unfold?

This is where discipleship becomes challenging to many devotees—when they become aware of the fact that they have to make decisions and behave in ways which are entirely appropriate and conducive to real spiritual growth. Because of resistance to necessary

change a "truth seeker" may say, "Tell me about God and the masters but don't talk about diet, behavior, relationships, money, or personal duties. I want to hear about spiritual matters, not about secular ones."

Sri Yukteswar once said to a disciple, "Those who are too good for this world are already adorning some other one." Duties and relationships cannot be denied so long as we are in this or any world, but they can be spiritualized or redeemed. They can be entirely appropriate and life-enhancing. How we live is evidence of our degree of true understanding and spiritual awareness.

If your present circumstances are not satisfactory, adjust your mental attitude and states of consciousness and be open and receptive to useful changes. If actions are necessary, engage in productive actions to initiate useful change. But do not allow yourself to settle for what is not highest and best for you. Just as the universal field of consciousness is the field of infinite possibilities, so your consciousness is likewise a field of infinite possibilities. Therefore, all restrictions and limitations, if they exist for us, exist first in our own minds. In our pure consciousness, no restrictions or limitations exist. By learning to live out of pure consciousness we remove awareness from the restricting influences of conditioned mental states. We are then able to make right choices as well as to be responsive to the operations of the universe which is supportive of us. These may seem like but pleasant sounding words until we really comprehend their meaning. When we acquire insight into their meaning, when our awareness is removed from memory and illusion, we are able to function as the spiritual beings we are and experience life accordingly.

So long as we relate to relative spheres we are citizens of eternity. Therefore, until final transcendence we will be somehow involved with world processes and relationships. Think in terms of long-range purposes; what you will be doing in the distant future. Prepare now by living a fully conscious life every moment while contemplating your spiritual destiny: Why am I in this world? What does life want to do through me? What can I do to be more compliant with life's purposes? Ponder these matters deep in your soul. The answers may not immediately come to mind. Be patient. Prepare yourself. Be open to guidance, to insight and discovery. You will soon discern signs of divine guidance and even as you help yourself in practical ways you will become aware of a Larger Reality, a Higher Intelligence that is

determining your life down to fine details. No one else can adequately explain this process to you. You will have to experience it for yourself, and you can. It will take you into as yet unknown territories of consciousness and your life will be one of ever-new discovery.

This is how it is for the devotee who is born of the Spirit. Such a one becomes aware that he or she is not contained by the mind, body or present circumstances. The reality of you is not mind, body or circumstances. The reality of you is God. This is the undeniable truth of the matter and if you do not now know it, you will. While attending to all practical matters and to regular, deep meditation practice, be ever desirous of realizing God and ever alert and watchful for incidents of awakening and knowing.

In the depths of your consciousness, behind the screen of your mind, behind your feelings and actions, let your unceasing mantra be, "God, God, God."

Kriya Yoga Initiation

Now that you have completed this Master Course, if you are not already a Kriya initiate you may request initiation. The best way to experience this process is to personally attend a week long retreat program at CSA headquarters during a summer session or when Mr. Davis visits your part of the country or world.

If this is not possible now, you may request a cassette tape recording of an initiation service presented here during a gathering of devotees. By following the guidelines which will be provided, you can thus be initiated in the privacy of your own home or meditation chamber.

When you feel that you are prepared to take this step, write our office and request the Kriya Yoga Initiation cassette tape. Enclose $5.00 for the tape, postage and handling costs. Be sure to tell us that you have completed this lesson series.

Note: Only persons who have received these lessons directly from Center for Spiritual Awareness or who are CSA Inner Circle members may request the audio cassette. This is to ensure that only persons who are adequately prepared by study and personal practice are offered Kriya initiation.

Rejoice in the Spirit of God

Established in the Self, Be Blissful

Bliss consciousness is other than happiness as defined by sensory perception or feeling. The bliss referred to by saints is pure awareness of being, sheer, nonmodified existence, the emotionless joy of absolute realization of Self freedom.

The bliss of being is of the soul. It pervades mind and body, contributing to balance, wellness and outer indications of happiness without need of demonstrative emotional behavior. Settled in pure awareness, in the bliss of such realization, we observe flows of cosmic forces within and around us which are entirely harmonious and constructive. Our actions are ordered and purposeful, and not contrived in any way to add to our awareness of being. We can live without obsessive need because Self-complete within ourselves and attuned with the Infinite.

This bliss of being can be experienced during occasions of quiet meditation and at any time when we return awareness to the center, to the source. Thus grounded, we are truly holy or whole.

– Roy Eugene Davis